

LAVINIA.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR ANTONIO."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1861.

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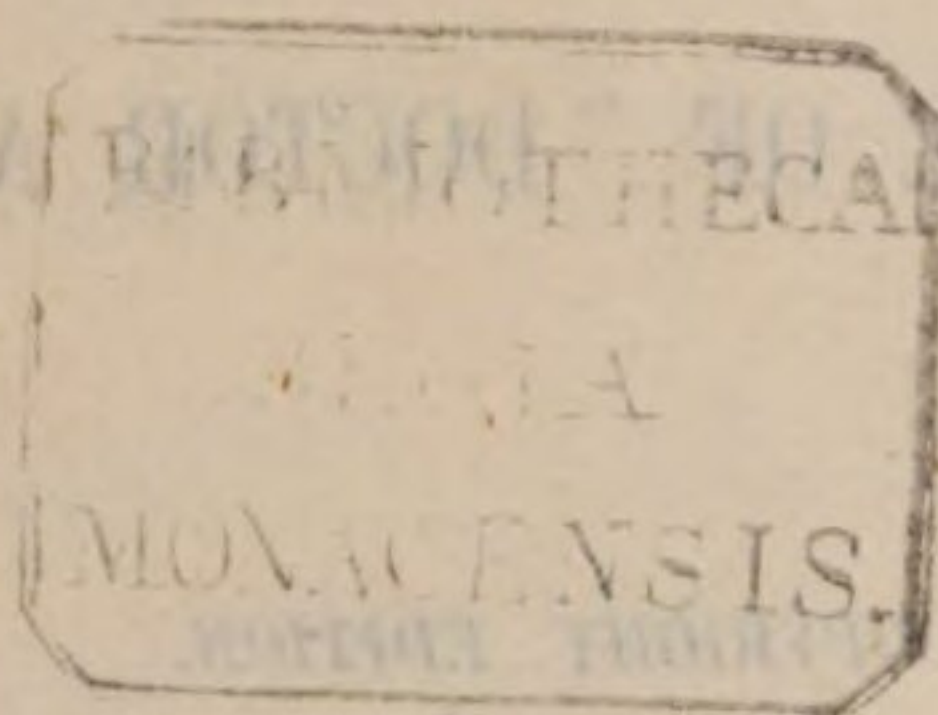
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IN THE VOLUME

VOL. I

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L A V I N I A.

CHAPTER I.

The Studio.

IN a painter's studio, in Via Frattina, Rome, a young man was sitting astride a chair, his elbows resting upon its back, his chin on his crossed hands, his eyes riveted to a canvas on an easel opposite to him. It was a large canvas, containing no less than six full-length figures in the foreground (the background was scarcely chalked out), four of them nearly finished. The chief one of this group was a warrior in the garb of ancient Gaul, dismounting from a fiery steed, and in the act of throwing his sword into the one of two scales, already containing iron weights, the other being full of gold.

The young painter gazed at this group with anything but complacency. Indeed, his strikingly handsome features wore such a vivid expression of disappointment and annoyance, as to be painful to behold.

Presently, after a knock which was either unheard or unheeded, the door of the studio opened, and admitted a tall, commanding, and we scarcely dare add, middle-aged gentleman. He might be fifty, he might be thirty years of age. His shortcut, almost white hair and beard, went as far to support the first hypothesis, as the second was rendered plausible by the still youth-

ful character of his face — a fine, handsome, pensive face, colourless as though the battle of life had left no drop of blood in the veins of the owner. That he had fought, was evidenced by two deep channels, worn by care at each corner of the mouth. He was plainly and soberly dressed, and with a greater regard to personal ease and comfort than to fashion, as might be inferred from the ample folds of his dark trousers and a flowing upper garment, half-coat half-cloak. Round his throat was a bit of black silk, worn cravat-wise, but so narrow that it was scarcely visible under the turned-down collar of a shirt exquisitely fine and white.

It was not easy to determine at once to what country he belonged. So far as his style of dress, his pale countenance, and his unshaven beard (scanty, it must be owned) were concerned, he might have been taken for one born on the Continent; but there was [in his carriage, in his bearing, in the whole habit of his body, an individuality, a touch of raciness and originality, *sui generis*, which rarely falls to the lot of Continental people. The soundest conjecture seemed to be that he was a native of Great Britain, who had lived long abroad. At least, the way he held out his hand, and the hearty squeeze he gave to that of the young painter, were unmistakeably English. Had they invented nothing but this "shaking hands," the English would still be a great people.

"Good morning, Paolo; been hard at work, eh? that's a good boy. I guessed as much from not seeing you last evening. Now then, let's see. Heyday! three new figures almost done in a sitting!" and the visitor fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for the least showy of eye-glasses.

"It is not worth looking at," said Paolo, dejectedly. "I had it all here last night," and he struck his forehead with his fist; "I laid me down in my kennel in the belief that I should do wonders to-day. Got up early; worked away; and all to no purpose. I have it all here," with another knock on his forehead, "but I cannot bring it forth."

"Nonsense," said the tall gentleman, who by this time had fixed his eye-glass, and was examining by its help the canvas on the easel; "your front group is done in gallant style; let me tell you it is very good."

"I expected you to say something of the sort. You perceive that I am discouraged, and you want to comfort me. But in your heart of hearts you know that what I have done is neither more nor less than a failure."

"As true as my name is Mortimer, I know no such thing. When I say that it is very good, I mean what I say."

"In that case," interrupted Paolo, snappishly, "you are less of an artist than I gave you credit for."

"Be it so," said with a quiet smile the other, who had announced his name to be Mortimer; "but let me finish what I was going to say; and that was, I understand perfectly well you are not and cannot be satisfied with your performance. Mediocrity often is; it is one of the privileges of genius never to be so."

"That is a privilege," said Paolo, "supposing I were a genius, I could renounce without breaking my heart. Rather call it a doom than a privilege."

"Call it what you like," was Mortimer's answer;

"you can no more renounce it than any other part of what constitutes yourself. Privilege or doom, it has its high purpose. Suppress in fact, this stimulus to an indefinite improvement, this everlasting yearning after something better still than what has been achieved, be it ever so good — this unceasing call for new efforts and exertions — and you suppress the root and foundation of all human excellence. Can you conceive a man born of woman, sitting before his work, and saying, God-like, 'It is very good'?"

"Certainly not," said Paolo; "you can't think me such a fool as to expect from man what is alone the attribute of God — perfection. What I deplore and find fault with, is my utter inability to reproduce that ideal, imperfect though it may be, which is so clearly present to my mind's eye."

"As if the very nature of things did not account for this discrepancy between your conception and its embodiment," observed Mortimer. "Where is the wonder if your ideal, a pure speculation of the mind, gets somewhat dimmed in the process it must needs pass through, to become a sensible reality? Where's the wonder, if the spiritual, in assuming the material garb, loses something of its effulgence? I have heard you allow this a score of times."

"I daresay you have, I daresay you are right, and I daresay I am wrong," returned Paolo, in a tone of increased desolation. "The result is there, and it proves that I have not the stuff in me of a good painter. I wish I were a drawing master, still hiring out my pencil at two paoli an hour. I had none of these mental battles then. I am sick of them. I was happy; but ever since you inoculated me with ambition, ever since you took

it into your head to turn me into an historical painter, I have not had an hour's rest."

The two deep furrows about the Englishman's mouth quivered, while the tone of his voice, hitherto gentle and affectionate, sharpened with a slight bitterness, as he said, "Pray curse me at once then."

"I!" exclaimed Paolo, like one startled out of a dream.

"Yes," pursued the Englishman; "curse me as the cause of all your distress. But for me, would you not be happy? I am accustomed to such repayment. Go on, cur —"

Paolo sprang towards his friend, clasped both his hands within his own, and looking into Mortimer's eyes with his friendly ones, exclaimed, "Curse you! Are you mad, Mortimer? Curse you, my friend, my second father! How can you say such horrible words? Don't mind my stupid ways, don't think me ungrateful — you must not! I would do anything to please you. Try me. Say the word, and I will fling myself headforemost into the street. Just try me!" And there Paolo stood, ashy pale, with trembling hands, and eyes full of tears — a very picture of passionate grief.

Mortimer's flash of anger or sudden shock of pain, or the combination of the two, at the reproachful regrets of his friend, was happily not so intense as to require for its cure that rather heroic and eccentric sedative, — a somersault from a third story into Via Frattina — proposed by the offender. He contented himself with saying good-humouredly: "Ah well! always in extremes. However, it will be so, I suppose, to the end of the chapter. So, now, cheer up, and let me hear what it is that you find fault with in this group."

"By and by I will tell you," said Paolo, who found it difficult to master his emotion at once. "Always in extremes — yes, you are right; I am ashamed of myself. If you would only fret, and fume, and storm a little for company's sake, it would be a consolation. But no; you take things so coolly; nothing can stir you out of your provoking British phlegm."

"British phlegm, indeed!" repeated the Englishman, with a laugh. "How many times have I not told you that our British phlegm is an article, just like many others labelled English, of purely Continental fabrication! I wish you could just have a peep of our House of Commons sometimes, of our railway stations always, or of our crowds, to form an idea of what our phlegm is like. Why, my dear sir, we are lucifer matches, — cannot be touched without bursting into a blaze. A new singer, a patriot, Tom Thumb, the hippopotamus, spirit-rapping, movement cure — why, everybody and everything sets us on fire. Ah! ah! phlegmatic indeed! We are the rashest, the most excitable, blundering, enthusiastic set of animals under the sun; burning Etnas under a coat of ice: with us life is a race, a storm: pleasure, business, virtue, vice, we overdo everything. Statesmen, students, authors, artists, work at high pressure and die of overtasked brains. Drunkenness itself changes nature and name with us, and becomes delirium."

Paolo lacked both the data upon which to dispute or confirm the accuracy of Mortimer's statements, and the disposition to do either, even had he possessed the data; for, if it was one of the Englishman's crotchets to express opinions about his country and countrymen sometimes little complimentary, more often oddly at

variance with all current notions, — it was another of his crotchets also, to allow nobody to echo or contradict him on such reserved topics; just like a fond mother, who scolds a naughty darling, and shrinks equally from being opposed or agreed with.

“Now come,” resumed this crusty Mortimer after a pause, during which he had closely surveyed Paolo’s picture, “what objection have you to your Brennus? He looks to me a very fine fellow.”

“You will think me hypercritical,” answered Paolo, “if I say that his action to my eyes does not appear characteristic enough of the deed he is doing.”

“In other words,” retorted the other, “you quarrel with him for not articulating distinctly the celebrated *Væ victis!* You could put a slip of paper in his mouth with the words on it, as many of the old painters did. Jestings apart, let me tell you, my dear friend, that Art has limits of its own, beyond which there is only chaos and confusion. When a painter has brought out, clearly and powerfully, the passions characteristic of the deed the hero is about — savage scorn and covetousness in the present case — the intent and purpose of Art is satisfied. We may dismiss Brennus, and pass on to Sulpitius. What is wrong with him?”

Paolo hesitated for an instant, then said, —

“Sulpitius looks stiff, he wants naturalness and simplicity.”

“There is some truth in what you say,” remarked the Englishman, after a little consideration. “It is the strait waistcoat of allegory, into which a misplaced patriotism has forced your subject, which gives to Sulpitius and Co. — not to Brennus, though there genius

has got the upper hand of conventionality — which gives to your personages, I say, that somewhat constrained air, and to the ensemble that something at variance with the notions the real action represented would naturally suggest to our mind. Simplicity in execution presupposes simplicity in the conception; and yours is one of composite order, if ever there was one — men, in fact, and passions two thousand years old, and men and passions of to-day, in juxtaposition. You know that I objected from the first to this unnatural combination of two such discordant epochs and elements. Had you had the courage to wipe out of your canvas the modern element, which mars the ancient, there is no saying what might have been your success. Even as it is, take my word for it, it is a good picture, and Brennus a fine fellow.”

Paolo at first remained silent, as though weighing Mortimer's arguments, then said, —

“I have witnessed an act of great injustice; I possess neither the club of Hercules with which to slay lions or hydras, nor the sinews of Samson to pull down the pillars of the temple. I have but my palette and brush: I use the only weapons I possess to brand a great injustice. Ought that to be imputed to me as a fault?”

“God forbid that I should do so,” returned Mortimer. “I respect the feeling which guided your pencil; what I question is the expediency of indulging that feeling with no likely prospect of furthering art, or your fame.”

Paolo made no answer; he arranged his palette, and set himself diligently to work. Mortimer watched in silence the progress of his friend's brush.

CHAPTER II.

Par Nobile Fratrum.

PAOLO was the son of Orazio Mancini, a country gentleman.

The road between Viterbo and Montefiascone, runs through a desolate volcanic region, frequently intersected by ravines and gorges. In one of these gorges, more dreary, if possible, than the others, lies hidden a grim and miserable-looking village, called from a number of small waterfalls in its vicinity, "Cascatelle." In this secluded spot, the birthplace of the Mancini, Paolo's father had inherited a large massive mansion, and a tract of land more than sufficient to maintain a numerous family in affluence, had the produce of it been in any way proportionate to its extent. But the soil was volcanic and refractory to cultivation, so that Orazio's considerable estate yielded him just enough, with strict economy, to make the two ends meet.

Orazio Mancini, a man of simple and frugal habits, had also an active and adventurous disposition. While studying medicine at Rome, he had busied himself much with geology and mineralogy, and from the configuration and composition of the mountainous district around Cascatelle, it seemed to him that he had every right to augur the existence of beds of coal. A good deal of his time was accordingly spent in exploring the country thereabouts, with the view of wrenching forth the secret of its hidden treasure.

The only path from Cascatelle to the heights, the usual field of Orazio's investigations, lay by the Rocca, a huge mound of unpicturesque ruins, commanding the

road at a hundred paces from the village, and once the seigniorial residence of the Rodipani. Of noble birth, high pretensions, and small fortune, the Rodipani had from time immemorial resided at Rome, where they had won for themselves the well-merited praise of being the most indefatigable and successful place-hunters and sponges on the public ever known.

Faithful to family tradition, the last marquis and his younger brother had thrown themselves on the State, the former as one of the Pope's Guardia Nobile, the latter as assistant-segreto to one of the prelate auditors of the sacred Roman Rota. Activity, perseverance, ductility, parsimony, spirit of intrigue, power of dissimulation — in none of the qualities necessary in an aspiring priest was Assistant Rodipani wanting, and accordingly he increased in dignity and wealth; while his elder brother, the unambitious, hot-headed, warm-hearted Guardia Nobile, who would have his joke, though at the expense of his Holiness himself, got more reprimands and arrests than promotion, and was at last cashiered for insubordination.

Though wanting in judgment, the marquis was by no means deficient in feeling, and, like most hasty-tempered persons, once the first heat was over, could listen to reason when kindly and gently administered. But kindness and gentleness were not, at least as far as his brother was concerned, among the Christian virtues of the late assistant-segreto, now Canon Rodipani. From earliest boyhood the harshness of manners and assumption of superiority in his brother, had irritated the marquis, and the ill-will then engendered between them had grown with their growth, strengthened with their strength. People indeed used to say of the

younger Rodipani, that he visited on his elder brother the sin of being the first-born. Be this as it may, high was the wrath of the canon, and highly intemperate the words in which he expressed it, at the news of what he styled the disgrace of the family. The ex-Guardia Nobile snapped his fingers at "the family," declared with an oath that he would not be bullied by the tonsure, and went his way.

For more than a twelvemonth the brothers were as good as dead to each other. At the expiration of that period, the marquis received a request for an interview from the canon, who, stiff, cold, and formal as a judge, stated how — not at all from any personal regard, but from respect for the name they both bore — he had sought and found a means of raising the marquis from the abyss of self-degradation into which he had plunged. This means was, of course, a good marriage; which meant fifty years ago, as it does now-a-days, a rich marriage. Fancy the pleasure of the listener at a communication so kindly based, and so sentimentally worded. "He saw in it," answered the marquis through his clenched teeth, "a new proof of that brotherly solicitude to which he had already been so indebted. Though he regretted that he could not fully gratify this fraternal interest, still he rejoiced that the disappointment would be qualified. He, by a strange sympathy, had also thought of marriage as a means of salvation, and he was now actually on the eve of entering the holy state of matrimony."

"Doubtless," observed the canon, with a sneer, "the bride elect was worthy of the preference given her by such a connoisseur. Might he inquire the

name of the fortunate mortal who was to be his sister-in-law?"

The reply was, that his reverence might become acquainted with it, if he chose, next Sunday at the parish church of Santa Sabina, where the banns were to be published.

The banns were published, and the name of the future marchioness, the daughter of a small tradesman, was divulged from the pulpit to the gossip of all Rome. In spite of the canon's opposition, the marriage took place, and in spite of the sneering prognostications of the gossips, a fortunate one it proved. The marquis had secured what he very greatly needed — a guide; and he who had revolted under the sway of an imperious master, now willingly submitted to the gentle guidance of a sensible and affectionate wife.

Years passed, and things went on smoothly and pleasantly with our couple. Not that the husband had grown steady; he was one destined to a perpetual childhood; but the wife was steady enough for two; and whenever he stumbled, which was the rule and not the exception, there was one by his side with a firm hand to hold him up. Alas! that a day should come when that strong, faithful hand was stiff and cold, and could help him no more. Such a day came after eleven years of wedlock.

The grief of the bereaved husband had all the violence of a tornado. If his constitution did not break altogether, or his reason give way under the shock, as feared at first, he certainly came out of it a much older and weaker-minded man. Lonely and dispirited, he turned for cheering and consolation to certain quarters,

where he was sure to find misery and self-abasement — to old associates and old haunts — to the bottle and the gaming-table. There was no lack of rogues and cheats of both sexes to encourage him in his career of extravagance, and to make merry at his expense; no lack of usurers to supply funds for his follies. So that he could raise money, he never cared at what sacrifice. The upshot of all this was what it naturally would be. The Marquis Rodipani awoke one morning a ruined man. His vineyard at Ferentino, his cascina near Fermo, the very house he lived in; in short, the only possessions he had worth the taking, were in the hands of his creditors. They left him only that which they had neither the power nor the inclination to take — his entailed property at Cascatelle, consisting of a mansion in ruins, and a tract of unprofitable land, mortgaged for double its value, and the rent of which was equal to zero.

Thus driven to the wall, the marquis had not a moment's hesitation in applying for help — so dead was he by this time to all sense of shame and self-respect — to that brother from whom he had lived estranged for the last sixteen years. He wrote to him accordingly, and received a reply, such as the precedents of Canon, now Bishop *in partibus*, Rodipani, would warrant one to expect. It ran thus: "Your avowal that you are a beggar does not surprise me. I never expected you to end otherwise. My only wonder is, that you have taken so long to arrive at such a conclusion. Deliver Rome and me instantly from the disgrace of your presence, and retire to Cascatelle. On your complying with this condition, and

to preserve the name you bear from further degradation, I will then settle on you a small annuity."

The marquis, in a foaming rage, despatched forthwith a counter-demand, couched thus: "I reject with scorn your ultimatum, and give you mine. If within three days from this date I have not your bond for a monthly payment of sixty scudi, secured to me for life, I will bring down the name of Rodipani so low, as to make it indeed an opprobrium to all who bear it. I take G— to witness that I will."

There being no bond forthcoming within the time specified, the marquis set about fulfilling his threat. That remainder of decorum, which well-born and well-bred debauchees never entirely renounce, even in their days of most unbridled licence, he now utterly disregarded. He frequented the haunts of the lowest rabble, selecting as his companions the vilest of the refuse of Rome. Pipe in mouth, and in rags, he would parade the Corso, or pace the Pincio, arm in arm with recognized blacklegs, or the most abandoned of the other sex. Nor was his rage after self-degradation satisfied by such daily exhibitions. People got accustomed to them, and they missed their effect. He must and would finish off with a *coup d'éclat*. What do you think he did? He volunteered his services to the manager of the Tordinona theatre, and actually appeared on the stage as one of the choreographic corps in the ballet. The scandal was as immense as he could have desired; all Rome flocked to see the *début* of Marquis Rodipani. An order from the minister of police, sued for and easily obtained by Bishop Rodipani, put an end to the disgraceful display. The new

débutant was enjoined to leave Rome within eight and forty hours, and proceed to Cascatelle. Promises, entreaties, expostulations were of no avail; willingly or unwillingly, go he must.

Let man do what he will to deface himself, yet the hand of Him in whose image he is made will be traceable in some corner or other of his being. Such was the case with that lump of cynicism and selfishness which went under the name of Marquis Rodipani. Even he had his badge of our divine origin, his redeeming point, in the tender passionate love he bore to his darling daughter. Bianca was the eldest and the only surviving of his three children. Only a few months previous to, and as if in prescience of her approaching end, the fond mother had insisted on sending her little girl to the convent of Santa Chiara, there to receive her education. The child had been an inmate of that house for six years, and never once, during these six years — no, not even at the culminating point of his follies and extravagance — had her father failed to go and see her on any of the weekly parlour days, ministering to her little wants and comforts, telling her how fondly he loved her, and of the saint she had in heaven in her blessed mother.

In her seclusion, Bianca knew nothing of her father but what he chose to show of himself, and that was well calculated to endear him to her. His care, then, well requited at all times, was never more so than now, when he came to confide to her the bad tidings, with an accompaniment of sobs and sighs, that she would see him no more, that he had come to bid her farewell. The poor young thing was quite upset by such news. Why must he go away? and if he really must, why

could she not go with him? The selfish man caught eagerly at this notion; in fact, what was there to prevent her? she was his own child after all. His conscience, however, bade him hint at the dreariness of Cascatelle — such a dull place for a girl of fourteen! “It could scarcely be duller than the convent,” said Bianca; and then, what did she care for the place, so long as she was with him? In short, father and daughter being of one mind, they at once sought an interview with the mother abbess. To the reverend lady Marquis Rodipani detailed his plan of residing for the future in the country, adding that his daughter being willing to accompany him, he had come to claim her. Bianca simply and firmly declared her determination to be her father’s companion.

The mother abbess naturally started many objections. Bianca had not yet finished her education, Bianca was too young to decide for herself; at all events, the abbess could not permit her to go, without first consulting the proper authorities. The marquis wished to know what authority the lady placed above that of a father in this case. The abbess replied by obscure hints about fathers who had by their conduct forfeited their authority. At this, Marquis Rodipani lost patience, and went straight to the minister of police. “I am ready to leave Rome,” said the marquis, “but I must first have my daughter.” The high functionary disclaimed all intention of interfering with paternal rights, beyond ascertaining what were the real wishes of the young lady, and that should be done through the intervention of a most unexceptionable person.

The unexceptionable medium proved to be Bishop Rodipani, who no sooner was acquainted with the matter,

than he went in great haste to the convent. Skilful cross-questionings, adroit cajoleries, obscure warnings, overt menaces, all that the combined diplomacy of an abbess and a bishop could contrive, and bring to bear on a child of fourteen to frighten or persuade, that child stood for hours, without faltering, without for a moment swerving from her determination. "I go of my own free will," she said; "he is my father." A simple statement, which has its weight in the mouth of a man's child. The bishop *in partibus* and the mother abbess felt this, and yielded. The marquis carried off his Bianca in triumph. Thus they came and settled themselves at Cascatelle — not in the ruined mansion, a habitation fit only for bats and owls, but in the little homestead close by. There they lived on a small allowance doled out to them by the bishop; Bianca, the clever child housekeeper, maintaining by her activity and energy an element of order and comfort round them; the old dotard, her father, cursing *in petto* his brother, and wasting his time in devising idle plans for annoying that brother.

CHAPTER III.

Anticipated by the Reader.

THE marquis and his daughter had been living at the farm for nearly five years, when Orazio Mancini, on his father's death, had to give up his studies at Rome, and come and settle at Cascatelle. Now, on his excursions, whether in going to or returning from the heights, Orazio had no choice but to pass by the humble dwelling of the Rodipani; and as the old marquis —

(for, though scarcely fifty at that time, he was so bent and so white-haired that he looked seventy) — well, as the old marquis used to sit for hours together on a wooden bench by the door, sunning himself, it was next to impossible that Orazio could pass unobserved. Naturally, the usual courteous salutations were exchanged, and more than once had the “Good morning, marquis,” from the young man, in response to the “Good day, doctor,” from the marquis, elicited from the latter something like “Confound the marquise,” or “It is tin I want, not titles;” that is, the irate old nobleman used Italian phrases equivalent to these English ones. The words were muttered, not openly articulated, lest *she* should overhear him.

In the course of time the passing greetings lengthened into short conversations. Orazio, as being the only inhabitant of Cascatelle who took the official *Gazette* of Rome, would stop a few minutes to give the news. The marquis would now and then ask, in a confidential whisper, if there were no casualties among the higher clergy; no apoplexies from the heat of the weather; no spirited carriage-horses running away, and dashing out the holy brains of some bishop *in partibus*. Again, there was a change. From conversing while standing, the doctor (so called by courtesy) was invited to converse seated; and, to make a long story short, by the end of the year of his first settling at Cascatelle, Orazio had become a daily visitor at the farm of “La Rocca,” Bianca’s friend, and Marquis Rodipani’s physician, first adviser, and confidant.

Bianca was, by this time, a beautiful girl of twenty, sensible, calm, uncommonly serious for her age. She had that sort of spiritual beauty which does not lie on

the surface, but shines forth from within, the emanation of a pure, lofty soul. Her tall, slender figure, jet-black hair, large jet-black eyes, and alabaster complexion, gave her an unearthly look — the look, Orazio could not help thinking, of an early Christian virgin-martyr. The villagers likened her to the Madonna, and stood hat in hand as she passed. There was something holy and purifying in her mere presence, which acted mysteriously on all who saw her, and the soft spell of which her father, half in his dotage as he was, felt and submitted to. The marquis had become quite another man. In his daughter's company he behaved as decorously as the most respectable father of a family could have done; not for the world would he have uttered before Bianca, we do not say one of his old oaths and curses, but not even a word louder than the other. He must make very sure that she was absent on some errand; he must actually go to the road, and see the flutter of her white dress far off, before he would hazard one of his former wicked winks at Orazio, meant to express — "What a monstrous fine girl, eh?" and add with a sigh, "What a pity you are a gentleman!"

"What do you mean?" asked astonished young Mancini.

"I mean that were you a rag-gatherer you might have her. Don't you understand? Why, it would make the old rogue *in partibus* burst with rage."

It was a fixed idea with the half-witted gentleman that his daughter must make a low marriage, in order to spite his brother. Little confidences of this kind had occurred more than once between the marquis and Orazio, and more than once had Orazio said to himself,

with a sigh, "What a pity it is that she is nobly born!"

To be born a noble was in Orazio's eyes an original sin, which nothing could wash away. This prejudice, imbibed in earliest childhood — a prejudice so intense as to amount to positive hatred — was common to most of the early Italian patriots and sympathizers with the French Revolution of 1789, of whom Orazio's father was one. Nor is it difficult to account for, and even to some extent to justify, this feeling of animosity towards the aristocracy. They had brought it upon themselves, less by abuse of power than by want of self-respect. The eighteenth century, especially towards its close, was no golden age of Arcadian innocence; rather the reverse. Nor for Italy alone: there much laxity of morals and licentiousness prevailed, the monopoly of no class, it is but fair to add; the evil ate more or less into the social body; yet it is not to be denied that scepticism and gross sensuality had chiefly originated, and blazed forth most conspicuously, in those upper classes, in whom the vulgar always seek a pattern, and whose example exerts a too decisive influence on the general standard of morality. Hence the fiery anathemas of Alfieri, and the witty sneers of Goldoni and Parini; hence their denunciation of the Patriciate to the indignation and contempt of all those who had yet some moral sense left. The inglorious fall of the last two governing aristocracies in the Peninsula, those of Genoa and Venice, which followed shortly afterwards, goes far indeed to give the measure of their decay, and of what remained of their hold and prestige upon the governed.

Things, it is true, had slowly but steadily mended

in this as in other respects, since that time. A healthier tone of morals had spread through all grades, many of the nobility had shaken off their sluggishness, and had awakened to high and noble aspirations and purposes. The very generation to which Orazio belonged had seen many of the Neapolitan and Piedmontese aristocracy join the national ranks in 1820 and 1821; had seen the representatives of the noblest Lombard families, for no other fault than that of loving their country, buried alive in that hell of man's invention, the Spielberg. A reaction in favour of the privileged classes had already taken place in the public mind; but such is the force of first impressions, and a deeply-rooted habit of thought, that even many of the witnesses of these changes for the better chose not to see them, and remained uninfluenced by them, hugging as fast and fondly as before their old rancour. Orazio was one of this number, and this explains why he said to himself with a sigh, "What a pity it is that she is nobly born!"

There was no lack, however, of extenuating circumstances in this case. Bianca had neither the pride, nor the self-conceit, nor the habits of self-indulgence — in one word, none of the sins — of the caste in which it had pleased Providence that she should be born. The name she bore, owing to her father's conduct, was no crown of glory for her. All her great relations and connections had silently renounced her. Her prospects were of the humblest, nay, of the saddest; she lived on alms, one might say; and if those alms were withdrawn, destitution stared her in the face. In the event of her father's death, the only hope left to her was, that her uncle the bishop, might find a husband for her.

And what sort of a husband God only knew. Portionless girls are generally at a discount. And Orazio's blood boiled at the thought of so much virtue and beauty thrown away upon some old titled libertine. These and similar considerations derived additional strength from two facts, the first no doubt, already anticipated by the reader, that Orazio was fathoms deep in love with Bianca; the second, that he had reason to believe — we word it as modestly as we can — that the young lady was not wholly indifferent to him.

Thus, one morning, when Bianca happened not to be at home, Orazio suddenly said to the marquis, "Do you know, neighbour, that I am no longer a gentleman?"

"No longer a gentleman!" repeated the surprised marquis.

"No," resumed Orazio, "I am about to turn rag-merchant; and I hope that, as such, you will accept me for your son-in-law."

"With all my heart," said the marquis, in high glee; "that is, if my daughter consents."

"Of course," replied Orazio, "your consent counts for nothing without that of your daughter."

"How the old rogue in violet stockings will fume and fret!" exclaimed the marquis, rubbing his hands. "Rag-merchant — the very thing — capital. What put such a notion into your head?"

"Why," returned Orazio, "I have decided at last to establish a paper-mill here. Paper is made of rags; I must therefore buy rags; so, you see, I am perforce a rag-merchant."

"Very good," said the marquis; "but what do you mean to do with your coal mines?"

"To leave them where they are; the working them would be too expensive for a man with so little capital as I have."

"And the alabaster quarry you discovered a short time ago?"

"It is too far off, and there is no road to the hills; but I have plenty of water at my door for my mill. So it will cost next to nothing."

Six months after this conversation, Bianca was married to Orazio, and installed in her new home — no other than the paper-mill, into which Orazio's house had been transformed. The marquis accompanied his daughter, and to him the best room was allotted. The marriage took place in the quietest manner possible; no fuss of any sort, no invitations, no *lettres de faire part* — at least, only one. At Bianca's suggestion, and unknown to her father, Orazio wrote a decent letter to Bishop Rodipani, to inform him of the marriage. Bishop Rodipani sent back in return four pages of choice invectives and maledictions against the good-for-nothing wretch who had taken advantage of an old man's imbecility, and a stupid girl's inexperience, to intrude himself, a plebeian, on the noble family of the Rodipani. Orazio handed this effusion, without a word, to Bianca, who read it, and, without a word, threw it into a pond close by, where a heap of rags were undergoing maceration. All this occurred in the early summer of 1829, and in the spring of 1830 Bianca presented her husband with a beautiful boy, named Paolo, after his grandfather the marquis.

By that time, the paper-mill was in full operation.

Uphill work it had been, for the manager knew little of the practical part of the business, and the workmen nothing at all, and were consequently in need both of teaching and training. But with a colleague like Bianca, what difficulties may not a man overcome, what weakness of head or hand not conquer! She possessed that sort of intuition, which not only discovers what is amiss, but also divines the remedy; she had that sort of self-reliance which commands the confidence of all around. Her quiet activity made itself felt everywhere; nothing was too low or too high for her. She found time and inclination, as well to see the rags weighed, to pay the hands their wages, to cast up the accounts, and yet to attend to the sublime duties of maternity, and to administer help and consolation wherever help and consolation were needed. Bianca had inherited the heroic soul of her blessed mother, the poor tradesman's daughter.

No wonder, then, that, as years went on, everything in the little household went on improving with them. The business became prosperous, the marquis fat and youthful-looking, the young Paolo tall, handsome, and clever — the lump of perfection, of course, which all children are in their parent's eyes. His father would say that a more decided turn for drawing than his Paolo evinced, he never had met with, and he resolved to fan the flame of genius accordingly. In truth, even less partial observers than a father and mother generally are, might have been struck with wonder at the precociously thoughtful countenance and earnest gaze of the four-year-old boy, as he sat poring over a book of pictures, or tried to copy one of the objects of his admiration. At this age it was that Paolo had his first

great sorrow, when he was told that never again would he see the one-week-old sister, who had already won his little heart, because she had gone away to be an angel in heaven. Happiness, you see, was not unalloyed at the paper-mill, and its inmates had their hours of trial. There came another cruel day two years after, when the marquis, struck by one of those thunderlike fits he had so often wished to his brother, was carried to his grave. Bianca bore the shock bravely. Affliction falls comparatively light on those united in love; it weighs terribly on those who are left to mourn alone.

In the spring of 1837, there broke out at Viterbo one of those attempts at insurrection, the periodical recurrence of which, ill-concocted and unsuccessful as they may be, is not less a proof of suffering next to unbearable in the social body from which they spring; because it is not to be believed that men of flesh and blood, if only tolerably at ease, will rush into the street, and cry down the powers that be, for the mere pleasure of receiving a musket-ball or a sabre cut, or, even worse still, of being sent to rot in a prison.

This movement at Viterbo, insignificant as it was, proved the foundation stone of Monsignor Antonelli's fortune, insomuch as it afforded the young and ambitious prelate, then delegate in that town, a golden opportunity of displaying for the first time, and attracting notice by, those talents for repression and compression, which have made him since so conspicuous a personage.

As ill-luck would have it, Orazio happened to be at Viterbo on business at the moment of the out-break. He left as soon as he could — the gates had been kept shut for twenty-four hours — and hastened to

Cascatelle. The news of the rising at Viterbo, magnified by distance and uncertainty, had preceded him, and he found the peaceful village in a state of fermentation. The young men of the place — for the most part, the hands employed at the papermill — were already arming themselves, as best they could, with the intention of proceeding to Viterbo.

Orazio arrived in time to check their ardour. He had to harangue them in the market-place, and not without difficulty did he succeed in bringing them to their sober senses, and restoring tranquillity. Within the same week, a party of gendarmes rode up to the paper-mill, handcuffed Orazio, and conveyed him to the prison of Montefiascone. Bianca, without hesitation, followed him thither; but orders were soon sent, in pursuance of which the prisoner was transferred to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, at Rome. Bianca returned to Cascatelle, to arrange the affairs of the mill; she omitted no precaution; left the minutest instructions and directions with the foreman, and then started for Rome, taking with her little Paolo. Orazio was now a State prisoner, accused of having harangued the populace in a public place, with intent to excite the inhabitants of Cascatelle to open rebellion.

A trial of a new kind was in store for Bianca at Rome. The poor lady was expecting an addition to her family; the fatigue of the hurried journey, and anxiety of mind, brought on a disappointing illness. The first fortnight of her stay in Rome she had to spend in bed; — fifteen days, fifteen ages at that moment. A letter to Bishop Rodipani, a letter written in the midst of agony of body and mind, received no answer. As soon as she could crawl, and in defiance

of the strict orders of her doctor, again and again did she seek admission to the bishop's presence; she knew no one else in the vast city: Monsignor was not at home; Monsignor was engaged; could not see her; would not see her. She was not to be rebuffed; it was for her husband's sake. For many successive days, passers-by noticed a lady, as white as death, standing by the gate, or sitting for hours on the doorsteps of the Rodipani palace. One day, at last, she caught sight of his reverence, as he was stepping into his carriage, and addressed him. He did not so much as turn his head her way, but ordered the coachman to go on. Bianca sprung to the head of the horses, and stood there motionless, looking him stedfastly in the face all the while: there was no defiance in her look, only an unconquerable determination. Monsignor, not moved, but awed by those two large eyes riveted on him — living eyes terrible to behold in that death-like countenance — monsignor condescended to listen to her — condescended to reply that, supposing he had been inclined, which he was not, he had no power in this matter concerning her husband. The carriage then proceeded on its way. Bianca fell on the pavement like one dead; no wonder, in her weak state. A compassionate tradesman close by lifted her up, and carried her into his shop. He and his family were very kind to her, asking how they could assist her: but when they heard her story, they shook their heads, and said, "Poor woman! had your husband committed murder, there would be hope for him still; but a political offender! —" Their looks clearly intimated that her case was hopeless.

Yet she must act, must exert herself as though it

were not hopeless. All her efforts to obtain the favour of an audience with his Holiness were baffled. Even Bianca's determination failed to carry her through the triple entrenchment, drawn by high and low functionaries, to guard the throne from intrusion. She petitioned — in vain. Letters and petitions fell short of their mark. She did force her way to some of the cardinals, and other influential personages; was rebuked by some, unheeded by most, pitied only by a few. Meanwhile, her bodily strength was fast failing. Her premature going out had entailed upon her fatal consequences, one of which was that she could scarcely walk. Trouble followed on the heels of trouble. Bad news came from the paper-mill; remittances were rare and scarce, poverty encompassed her. Still, the heroic spirit within upheld the frail and perishing body; so long as husband and son needed her, she could not, would not yield. What was to become of them, if she too deserted them?

So much constancy and self-sacrifice deserved a reward, and they found it. Bianca had been dragging her misery from door to door for eighteen months, when God, in His mercy, raised her up a protector and friend, in a priest according to the spirit of the Gospel — poor, humble, without interest, without connections, rich only in good-will and charity. He met her by chance in one of the antechambers of the powerful, where poor Bianca passed almost the whole of her time. He courted her confidence, listened to her tale, and comforted her by weeping with her. The holy man wrote down an abstract of her sad case, and handed it, accompanied by a strong recommendation from himself, to his single friend in high places, a prelate

and one of the judges of the Sacra Consulta. The tribunal of the Sacra Consulta has among its many attributions, that of the direction of the prisons. The judge, thus appealed to, instituted an inquiry into this prisoner's case, and the name of Orazio Mancini rang through the offices of this court. This species of notoriety was his salvation. Poor Orazio had been forgotten! Once recalled to mind, he was traced from prison to prison, and at last found. The charges against him were serious enough, but none proved; his name had not even once appeared in any of the depositions or examinations of the accused of Viterbo. A few months more, and Orazio was set free — unacquitted, but released on the ground of want of proofs!

A sadder joy was never seen: the meeting of husband and wife was like the meeting of two ghosts; they read in each other's looks that they met for a moment only, to separate for ever here below. Bianca felt an irresistible craving for rest; she faded faster every day, until her noble soul departed in peace. Her last words to Orazio were to ask forgiveness for deserting him; but it was the will of God. She bid him live for their Paolo.

Surely grief does not kill, or Orazio would not have survived her. Such is the misery of the flesh, that, heartbroken as he was, he lived — lived long enough to see his son one of the most promising pupils of the Academy of San Luca, win the Clementine prize, and be crowned at the Capitol; and also to see his little patrimony at Cascatelle pass into the hands of strangers. Such was the result of his eight years' struggle to retrieve his fallen fortunes. He died in 1847, one more of the thousand unknown victims of

that great incubus — despotism; leaving Paolo, a lad of seventeen, alone and all but penniless.

Paolo had been trained in too good a school to despond. He had nothing but his pencil and palette, and by them he determined to procure his daily bread. Plenty of his schoolfellows and friends as poor as himself, had no other income but what was thus gained. He would do like them. Life is easy to those who are contented with a crust and their independence. So he bought some scores of plain cards, and was in the act of writing on them, in his best hand, "Paolo Mancini, pupil of the Academy of San Luca, gives lessons in drawing, water-colours, and in oil-painting," when he was interrupted by an unknown visitor — a lean, yellow ecclesiastic, who announced himself as coming from Bishop Rodipani.

Paolo's blood tingled at the mention of that unwelcome name, and his first movement was to dismiss the messenger most unceremoniously; upon second thoughts, however, a kind of ironical curiosity seized upon him to hear what the new infamy might be which he scented in the air, and he listened.

The bishop's emissary went on to say, with great unction, that of all the virtues which adorned his reverence, the love of his kindred —

"Pray," interrupted Paolo, "reserve your panegyric of monsignor until he is dead, and come at once to the point."

"The message of which I am the bearer," said the black robe, "is one of the utmost consequence to you. His reverence is full of the most cordial feelings, I ought to say paternal feelings, towards you; for no father can

be more anxious about his son's welfare than is monsignor about yours."

"Very kind of monsignor, to be sure," observed Paolo. "And what may be the price of all this goodwill?"

"Oh, the price, sir!" in a feigned tone of astonishment.

"Yes, the price; or, if you prefer it, what is the condition — for of course there is one — with which I am to buy monsignor's good graces?"

"His reverence naturally expects that in return you will comply with a request of his."

"And that is —?" asked Paolo.

"A very simple thing — a mere matter of form. Monsignor would wish you to assume your mother's name, and —"

"And?" urged Paolo.

"And drop that of your father."

"Never," said Paolo, rising. "Tell monsignor that I worship my mother's memory as that of a saint, and that if it were customary, I should be proud to bear her name. But tell him also that I hold my father's memory equally sacred, and that never, for any earthly consideration, will I part with the name he made so honourable."

"Surely," said the messenger, bewildered, "I have not been explicit enough, or you have not understood me?"

"How not?" said Paolo.

"Consider a little, sir; do not be too hasty. It is monsignor's fortune — his whole fortune — a large fortune, sir, which you sacrifice to a mere scruple."

"Scruple!" repeated Paolo, with a contemptuous

smile. "Well then, learn this, you a man in years, from one still a youth, that there are scruples, which, in some men's consciences, outweigh all the gold of California and Australia put together."

The gentleman in the cassock raised both his hands to his head, as if such a heresy was beyond the endurance of his ears, and took his departure. Our youth sat down again, and recommenced writing his cards. As soon as they were finished, he took some to the shops most patronized by foreigners, and gave the rest to his comrades and brother artists to distribute whenever an opportunity should offer. A series of advertisements in the columns of a paper styled *L'Artista*, also apprised the respectable public that Paolo Mancini, drawing-master, was at their orders. By these means the young man picked up some stray lessons, just sufficient to keep him from actual starvation.

CHAPTER IV.

Paolo's English Friend.

ABOUT this time there arrived at Rome an English gentleman of the name of Mortimer Thornton. He had come to Rome, as he would have gone anywhere else, merely for a change; just as one sick from fever turns and turns on his couch, *id est*, less from hope of being more at ease in his new posture, than from impatience at being uncomfortable in the old one. Mr. Thornton had wandered over half the world, without finding rest or relief anywhere. His evil was one of those mentioned by the poet, that get into the saddle with the rider.

Mr. Thornton was a discontented man. We beg

the reader's pardon for introducing to his notice a character so generally, 'and so justly unpopular; it being, in fact, more pleasant to look at the bright than at the gloomy side of life. But this variety, however rare, exists, and must have its reason for existing. Discontent is not so gay a feather in itself, that any of us would stick it in our caps for the mere pleasure of wearing it. Our estimate of most things depends much on accident and first impressions. A glorious sunshine, or a pouring rain, an obliging or ill-tempered landlord, will create in the mind a prejudice for or against the town visited for the first time — a prejudice which nothing afterwards can cancel. The same may be said of life. Enter it, for instance, a sickly, puny child, with no one to love or cherish you, and ten to one that your isolation, and the inferiority which delicate health entails on a weakly boy, among a set of boisterous, robust co-mates, will colour your view of life in yellow. Grow up to twenty amid the cares and worries of a law-suit, which, if unsuccessful, may leave you a beggar, and though you win at last, it is not very likely that, were you called on to depict humanity, you would do so in rosy hues. And if the unfaithful guardian, who would have despoiled you, chances to be a vessel of cant and humbug, much petted and made of, and testimonialized in certain circles, the odds are that you may contract a strong dislike to cant and humbug, and that those two powers will revenge your want of fealty by painting you as black as ink, as a radical, socialist, atheist, and what not: all which will not tend to sweeten your blood. Well, such was Thornton's story, to which, if you add a last chapter, disappointment in love, the reader will not wonder at meeting him at Rome,

as sad, as weary, as discontented as when he first set out on his travels, two years before.

Mortimer Thornton had much natural taste for the fine arts, and, though an indifferent painter himself, was a good judge and a *connoisseur* in painting and sculpture. In one of his lounges through the Vatican, he saw a youth copying, in reduced proportions, the *Madonna di Foligno* of Raphael. Thornton was struck by the fine intellectual physiognomy of the young painter, and still more so by his performance. He stopped and spoke some words of praise, which proved he was himself one of the craft. The youth said little in return, but that little revealed the true artist. Thornton, before he walked on, offered him his own card, and begged to know, if he might do so without indiscretion, the name of a student of such promise. Paolo, for it was he, gave the Englishman one of the cards, on which he had so carefully written "Paolo Mancini gives lessons," &c.

"You give lessons!" exclaimed Mortimer, surprised.

"Indeed I do," answered Paolo, with a frank smile; "that is, when I am lucky enough to get any."

The other immediately said, he should like to take some. Paolo wished for nothing better. Thus it was the two became acquainted.

Thornton took a great liking to Paolo. He believed him to have a rare talent; in every stroke of his pencil he beheld that individual character, which bears witness to the possession of original powers. Such correctness and chasteness of outline, such delicacy and energy of colouring! "Surely," Thornton would say, as, arm in arm, they visited different galleries, "surely you ought

not to waste your time in giving lessons. I protest you have the stuff in you of a great painter."

"Have I?" questioned Paolo, with a doubting shake of the head. "Perhaps I may have sometimes deluded myself with such vain thoughts; but what good will thinking about it do? *Non omnibus omnia*, you know. Never mind." Paolo had no ambition in him. As the master and pupil got better acquainted, the latter grew more communicative, and would let the man be seen as well as the artist, and each day Thornton took a livelier interest in both.

Paolo was really a fine young fellow, just of the sort to suit a man in Mortimer's mood. Full to overflowing of enthusiasm for his art, for his Rome, for all that was good and beautiful; a little inclined to melancholy, as are those Italian natures worth anything; intolerant of conventionalities as a savage, extreme in his loves as in his hates, open-hearted, devoted, independent; — such was Paolo Mancini at seventeen.

"I shall not leave Rome," thought Mortimer to himself, "until I have awakened this young man to a sense of his own powers, and put him in the way of making himself famous." And Mr. Thornton debated with himself what might be the best means of attaining this end without wounding his young friend's susceptibility. Mortimer was so in love, and pretended to be yet more so than he was, with Paolo's copy of the *Madonna di Foligno*, that he must have a copy for himself. Paolo undertook the commission willingly, but would hear of no payment. Mr. Thornton remonstrated with him on the subject. "If I take your time, and consequently prevent the possibility of your earning your daily bread by giving lessons, it is but just and

fair that I should compensate you; otherwise how are you to live?" The argument was stringent, and even Paolo felt it to be so. A price was, therefore, agreed upon between them, which, though trifling, was riches to Paolo, compared with the produce of his lessons. To work, then, immediately he went.

Paolo was not only without ambition, but he was also indolent; that is, he had fits of feverish activity, with long intervals of unconquerable sluggishness. Mortimer gently chided him for this, setting forth the advantage of moderate but steady work — *nulla dies sine linea*. Paolo winced at first, but tried to correct himself in deference to his friend, whose ascendancy over him increased with every day; and so far disciplined himself, as to give this good friend satisfaction.

Thus weeks and months passed, and Mortimer Thornton was still at Rome, and had no thought of departing. That restlessness, that yearning for change, which had been the bane of his life for these last two years, had left him. The stagnant waters of kindred sympathy were again stirring within him; his long-unemployed capital of benevolence had found a safe investment; he had somebody to care for now, and a good object to achieve.

In his daily intercourse with the young Roman, Mortimer naturally fell in now and then with one or other of a little knot of friends and fellow artists, who rallied round Paolo, and acknowledged him as their best gifted, and their leader; hearty good companions with the wildest theories about Art, poor as rats, uncomplaining, heedless of the morrow, and ever ready to pawn their cloaks — those who had them — to assist each other. These youths had realized, under the most

despotic of governments, a republic of their own, with community of all their earthly goods, and they lived, to every practical end and purpose, freer than many who, born free, put round their necks, of their own accord, conventional tethers and logs of many a sort. Their manners were not refined, it is true, but frank and truthful; their jests sometimes rather broad, but witty and original, their linen was somewhat doubtful — alas! with the greatest desire, it is not given to everybody to put on a clean shirt every day — but their hearts were clean, and that was some compensation.

With such fine children of nature, a man of Thornton's tone of mind was sure to have much fellow feeling. His lungs dilated in this primitive atmosphere, as do the lungs of one who passes from a boudoir hot with musk and patchouli, into the open air of a March morning, sharp but bracing. To some of these young people, who had most influence with Paolo, Thornton opened his mind, pointing out the mistake it was, that one with Paolo's powers should waste so much precious time in giving lessons; and he thus very soon secured willing accomplices in his kind plots against the youth in question. Among them, Paolo was persuaded to establish himself in a studio, and to devote himself entirely to the production of a historical picture, the subject of which his imagination had for some time been fluttering about, and caressing. The picture — Beatrice Cenci before her judges — was finished in time to be admitted to the new exhibition, just opened in Piazza del Popolo. It excited some notice, and was sold at a fair price to Giuditta Taddei, the highly respected and respectable retired singer, who employed

a portion of an honourably acquired fortune in encouraging young artists. Signora Giuditta recommended Paolo to another patron of art, Prince Torlonia, who asked the young man to furnish him with the design of a fresco, which was to adorn the ceiling of one of the halls of Palazzo Bracciano. Paolo not only gave the design for the ceiling, but, with a view to complete the subject, added a few episodes, intended for the walls. The sketch so pleased the prince, that he charged Paolo with the execution of it; but the political commotions of 1848, and the events of which Rome was the theatre in that and the ensuing year, necessarily adjourned its being carried into effect.

Now it was, and especially towards the latter part of the struggle, when a French army was besieging Rome, and "deeds, not words" was the order of the day, — now it was that Paolo and his little band of young patriots proved what fine fellows they were, and that Thornton's sympathy for them warmed into reverence and admiration. He saw them unhesitatingly exchange brushes and pencils for muskets and swords; he saw them unhesitatingly march wherever danger called them; he saw them unflinching, bandying jokes amid the rattle of musketry, and the roar of artillery, he saw them forced back from the outer walls, keep their post night and day at the barricades within the city, prepared, if so ordered, to defend the ground inch by inch. Thornton saw all this, because he was one of them. Hard work it was, and well done. When at last all was over, and they counted their numbers, out of their gallant band of twenty-three, nine were wounded, three would be absent for ever.

Paolo returned to his atelier, and then and there

conceived, and sketched *ab irato* the political composition at which we found him at work — Brennus at Rome. But scarcely had he chalked out his subject, when he was forced to leave it to fulfil his engagement to Prince Torlonia.

Thornton, on his side, acting upon the adage, "Stay where you are well," made up his mind to settle at Rome. Strong affections, the means of being useful, a love of Art, freedom from the scotches and fetters which mar the action of morbidly independent and retiring natures, — such were his inducements to this step. He took a floor in Via Babuino, near Paolo's studio, fitted up two of the rooms, to which there was a separate entrance for Paolo, and said, giving him the key, "From henceforth you are my tenant, I want somebody to help me to pay the rent of my lodging," and named a fabulously small amount of scudi as Paolo's yearly share of the expense. Paolo, whose Lares were all in his painting-room, had at first some scruples about transporting them to so aristocratic a mansion and neighbourhood, but ended by yielding the point gratefully and gracefully. And thus it was the Englishman and the Roman came to live together, much in the relationship of father and son, or, as the young scamps of their coterie would say, of Mentor and Telemachus.

Paolo's fresco in the Palace Bracciano, extolled to the sky by the many, pitilessly disparaged by the few — just the very medium for insuring success — won for him golden opinions. Two other large pictures, which followed in succession, added to his reputation, and at the time we met him in 1853, Paolo Mancini was acknowledged to be the most promising among the

rising painters of Rome, and was already in a fair way to fame and fortune.

In spite of his success, however, Paolo thought very modestly of himself — nay, was subject to fits of unreasonable discouragement, almost of despair, such as the one we have witnessed. This despondency especially overshadowed him immediately after he had put the finishing stroke to a picture. The execution, would he say, always fell so short of his conception; and more than once would he have thrown aside palette and brush, had it not been for Thornton, who cheered, chided, reasoned, raged, just as a father might do with a promising son, or Minerva with Telemachus; and, somehow or other, Paolo generally ended by allowing Mentor was always in the right.

CHAPTER V.

The Note.

DURING the time it has taken us to introduce Paolo and his English friend to the reader, the former's picture, or newly-finished group of figures, has been discussed, criticized, and, on the whole, pronounced the very best thing he has done by an Areopagus of half-a-dozen of his intimates, who drop in regularly every morning to his atelier. Paolo lends a willing ear to the strictures, but is naturally shy of praise; so he stops the conversation whenever it takes too eulogistic a turn, and says, "Now let us talk of something else. What's the news?"

"The general of the Franciscans has died of an indigestion."

"We are going to have a new saint."

"A great storm is brewing at the Vatican," burst out three voices at once.

"Ih! ih! one at a time, *uno alla volta, uno alla volta, per carità*," sang a little blond, who owed to his somewhat feminine features, and to his being both a landscape and portrait painter and a poet, the nickname of Salvator Rosa. "Who is to be the new saint, and what has he done?"

"What has he done? I like the question," said he, who had given the news. "Benedetto Labre is to be canonized for having done nothing. He has been all his life a professional beggar out of Christian humility."

"A curious encouragement to self-exertion," observed Thornton.

"And what is the cause of this new storm at the Vatican?" asked another.

"Piedmont," replied Malva (mallow), so yclept from being a Piedmontese sympathizer, which was reckoned a great weakness — "infidel Piedmont, which threatens to suppress its convents."

"I wish it would suppress itself first," cried a flat-nosed sculptor, who, by reason of his nose and his profession, was never called otherwise than Buonarotti. "Piedmont is the bane of Italy."

"Fanaticism is the bane of common sense," retorted Malva. "In what manner, pray, is Piedmont the bane of Italy?"

"In the manner of a dam, which constrains great waters," replied Buonarotti. "But for Piedmont, and its sham liberties, Italy by this time would be a great and happy republic."

"Sham liberties!" replied Malva; "I like the notion vastly! A free press, sham! freedom of debate, sham! freedom of trade, freedom of conscience, Protestant temples, Jews members of Parliament, sham! If these are sham liberties, I should like to know what the real ones are. What do you say, Mentor?"

"I say that you are perfectly right," answered Thornton; "but, nevertheless, I call you and Buonrotti to order. We have made it a rule that politics should be a forbidden theme here, and we mustn't infringe the regulation. Harmony and goodwill are only to be had at this price."

"A Daniel! a Daniel! — you are right!" was the unanimous exclamation.

"*Bravo ben, bravo ben, così si fa,*" hummed Salvator, who had taken off his black velvet coat, and was busy mending it.

"Was tailoring among the accomplishments of your namesake?" asked some one of Salvator.

"Indeed, I make no doubt it was," returned he. "At all times *povera e nuda andò Filosofia*. The age never knows its great men; witness Homer, Dante, Galileo, and company. When I am dead, I am sure I shall have a monument raised to me, but — *ma sarà tardi allor.*"

Paolo put down his brush, and watched Salvator's occupation with an affectionate and melancholy look, then exclaimed, "How now, Salvator? no wild landscape to depict for a lover of the picturesque? no features of some contemporary celebrity to hand down to posterity for the modest sum of ten scudi?"

"None just now," said Rosa. "I have cut the palette, and taken to the lyre. I am writing a libretto."

And he sang, "*Per comporre un dramma serio, quattro mesi ho consumati, trenta scudi ho guadagnati; dite voi come si fa?*"

"By the by, what is to be the new opera next carnival?" asked one who had not yet spoken.

"Two of Verdi's, *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*," said Malva.

"Hang Verdi!" cried Buonarotti.

"Verdi for ever!" cried Salvator.

"Verdi is a humbug!" roared the former.

"Lictors," shouted the latter, standing up, and majestically waving the coat in his hand towards the door, "take hold of the blasphemer, and hurl him down the Tarpeian rock!"

"*Senatus populusque Romanus!*" yelled Buonarotti, getting upon a chair, and gesticulating theatrically: "I denounce this corrupter of public morals, this worshipper of false gods, to the Gemonies —"

"Verdi is a genius."

"Verdi is a fo—o—o—ol."

The door opened as the two were bellowing, and pointing towards it, and on the threshold appeared a young man in spectacles, who drew up the collar of his coat over his ears, covered his face with his hat, as if for protection, and otherwise made a comical show of being greatly afraid.

"Monsieur Dugentre! Monsieur Dugentre!" exclaimed several voices.

Dugentre was the *nom de guerre* of the new comer, a painter *de genre*, in fact, and of some merit; intolerant of anything but *genre*, worshipping *genre*, swearing by *genre*. Pélissier — such was his real name — had, till lately, been a pensioner of the French school

of painting at Rome. A realist in Art, a lover of paradox, a professed sceptic and epicurean, he was withal an excellent fellow at bottom, or he would not have remained on such friendly terms with these his Roman fellow-students and rivals, at a moment when his country and countrymen were rather at a discount with them.

"Are the barbarians at the gate of the Capitol?" asked he, advancing cautiously.

"Never mind where they are," said Paolo. "Welcome, Monsieur Dugentre; how fares the Real to-day?"

"Very well; many thanks. And the Ideal, is it flourishing, young Telemachus?"

"Briskly as ever," answered Paolo.

"Suppose you decide for yourself," interrupted Salvatore Rosa, pointing to Brennus and Co.

The Frenchman put his eye-glass over his spectacles, examined the picture long and earnestly, then said, —

"Beautiful, only *too* beautiful."

"How do you mean?" asked Paolo.

"I mean that it is too beautiful not to be unreal. Your figures are not to be found in nature, they are ideals. It positively makes my heart ache to see one who can design and colour as you do on the wrong track. We have outlived the Ideal."

"I would burn my brushes if I thought so," said Paolo, warmly.

"Do so at once, then," said Dugentre, "or use them to better purpose. You worship a fallen god. The Ideal has had its day, when men had faith and leisure: they have neither now-a-days; they have interests, that's all. The Real is the monarch of our age — the

age of steam, of electric telegraphs, and Californias. Out of realism, and its expression, the school of *genre*, there is no salvation for a painter. With your ideal you rub the hair of the present time the wrong way."

"I do, and pride myself in doing so, if the present time be such as you depict it," said Paolo. "Art is in its essence divine, and inventions and discoveries and photographs cannot alter its essence. If the alpha and the omega of Art were simply the reproduction of what you call the Real, why should God have put within us that incessant yearning after the Ideal, which makes our torment at once and our delight?"

"Enthusiast that you are!" cried Dugentre. "You satisfy yourself with words, and are set on fire by words. What is the Ideal, after all?"

"The Ideal is that divine halo with which the Creator has encircled the world of reality," answered Paolo. "So much the worse for those who do not see it."

"Bravo!" was shouted in chorus.

"A misty definition of a very misty thing," persisted the Frenchman. "It comes from Germany."

"Quite wrong; a countryman of your own wrote that," was Mancini's reply.

"Let who will say so, I confess I don't see this divine halo anywhere."

"The more is the pity," retorted Paolo, quickly. "Is the sun less dazzling for not being seen by the blind?"

"Come, come," said Dugentre, good-naturedly; "don't get angry, hot-headed Telemachus. I would rather renounce realism, and become a vaporous idealist, than give you offence."

"Nor do you, my dear friend," exclaimed Paolo, rising, and taking Dugentre by the hand; "it is my nature to speak hotly, but I am not angry in the least."

"Well, to prove it, you must come to-morrow and breakfast with me. I have a bit of *genre* of my own, and a case of claret, of both of which I want your opinion. May I rely on your giving me the light of your countenance, sage Mentor? Very well, come, every one of you, including Buonarotti's brother, whom I don't see."

"He is in the country," replied Buonarotti, "cooing like a dove, over head and ears in love."

"Is he?" said Paolo. "Then I congratulate and envy him. I wish I were in love myself; I am convinced that love makes a man."

"Or mars him," parenthesized Thornton.

"Neither the one nor the other, if one is wise," remarked Dugentre. "Women are neither the angels Mancini takes for granted they are, nor yet the devils Thornton declares them to be."

"For Heaven's sake," called out Thornton, "do not attribute to me such sheer nonsense. What I said, and what I maintain, is, that women are frivolous, and out of mere frivolity, without meaning it, may occasionally break a heart or two."

"Ungrateful that you are," was the Frenchman's repartee, "to find fault with the very instrument of your happiness: but for frivolity, that blessed key to their heart, how they would drive our poor, heavy, selfish, prosy selves!"

"Is a key worth while using which remains at the disposal of the first passer-by who may chose to get in

and turn you out?" asked Thornton, with a double dye of bitterness.

"What does it matter?" rejoined the realist. "It is one of the chances of war. If turned out here, I go elsewhere, that's all."

"Then love," said Paolo, "is with you but another name for pleasure."

"*Tu l'as dit*," cried Dugentre, with a laugh. "I consider this earth to be a garden, of which women are the animated flowers. Do we break our hearts if a rose is out of our reach, or if that we have picked withers in our button-hole? Not in the least; we pass to the next, or replace the withered with a fresh one. At all events, such is my philosophy."

"The philosophy of the harem," sneered Salvator.

"You are a pagan, Dugentre," burst forth Paolo, rising, and turning towards the Frenchman. "When you drag woman from her high pedestal, as the help-mate, the companion, the better half of man, to reduce her to the meagre proportions of a plaything, of a kind of *tableau vivant*, do you know what you do? You abolish at a stroke one of the noblest conquests of Christianity. By substituting pleasure for love, you suppress the soul, you deify matter, you dry up the living source of all that is noble, elevating, heroic in human nature; you make man —"

At this climax of his rhapsody, young Mancini was interrupted by a universal shout of homeric laughter, in which, a moment after, the excited orator himself joined most heartily. The cause of the general merriment was a stout negro, in an exaggerated suit of livery, who had suddenly appeared on the threshold of the room, and was now standing there, carrying a

note in his hand. His black features exhibited a ludicrous mixture of embarrassment and resentment.

A rolling fire of jokes followed the laughter.

"A messenger from the queen of Sheba."

"The Emperor Soulouque in person."

"An aggravated rainbow on a sky of ink."

"Is the Carnival begun, that monkeys go about in masquerade?"

"Oh! Albion, this is one of thy tricks."

"That is what it is," said Thornton, laughing; "we delight in such exhibitions, we take pride in them, we parade them. *Urbi et Orbi*, we grave British."

Meanwhile, Salvator strode up to the man in the rainbow, and looking him gravely in the face, without a question, took the note from his hand, and came back to Paolo, singing: *Sol due righe di biglietto; un biglietto? eccolo qua.*

"Thornton, do me the favour to see what it is," said Paolo, whose hands were encumbered. "As the sable caryatides does not move, I suppose there is an answer." Thornton broke the seal, and read aloud, for the note was in Italian. "Miss Lavinia Jones presents her compliments to Mr. Paolo Mancini, and being anxious to secure some lessons from so excellent a master, begs to know what days and hours would best suit his convenience. The favour of an answer by the bearer is requested. Palazzo Morlacchi, Via del Corso."

"*C'est un peu fort*," laughed Dugentre.

"An antediluvian notion," said Salvator.

"Miss Lavinia has dropped from the moon," remarked Malva.

"How many mis-spellings?" asked Buonarotti.

"Not one, I believe," replied Thornton. "The note is correctly, and I must say, beautifully written."

"Let me see," said Paolo. "Oh, charming — what a terse, elegant handwriting! a beautiful creature she must be, that possesses such a hand — perhaps my Ideal."

"Paolo, you must send an answer," said Thornton.

"I haven't got a sheet of decent writing-paper."

"Never mind, here write in pencil on the blank page of the lady's own note," said Mortimer, tearing it off as he spoke.

"That will do," said Paolo; and placing it on an easel, he wrote, — "Mr. Paolo Mancini presents his compliments to Miss Lavinia Jones, and begs to inform her, that having ceased to give lessons for the last six years, he must decline the —"

"Must respectfully decline," corrected the Englishman.

"Must respectfully decline the honour," wound up Paolo, "of teaching her. I am sorry to say I have neither envelopes nor sealing-wax, not even a wafer."

"Fold it up three corner-wise," advised Thornton, "and address it. You have kept the man waiting too long."

The note being at last folded, not without trouble, and addressed, Salvator once more went up to the messenger, put it into his hand with the same gravity and taciturnity with which he had divested him of Miss Lavinia's, and then pointed with his finger down the stair.

Paolo being warned by his stomach that it was past his time for breakfast, laid aside his working blouse, repaired behind a screen to wash his hands and face, put on his gray wide-awake, and they all adjourned to a neighbouring *café*.

CHAPTER VI.

The Visit.

AFTER breakfast, according to his wont, Mancini returned to his atelier. During the hour or so he had been absent, his picture had haunted him incessantly; he had seen with his mind's eye many improvements and additions, which he was impatient to seize and fix on his canvas. True genius is always thus in constant ebullition, never at rest. Creation in Art is a feverish process, without solution of continuity, — a ceaseless hand-to-hand struggle of the spirit against rebellious matter, wherein the victory is at the cost of throes of heart, soul, and brain. The beautiful, like the oracles of old, gives neither response nor insight into its arcana, save to the Pythoness writhing in a sacred frenzy on the divine tripod.

The afternoon was Paolo's time of privacy. By a tacit agreement between him and his friends, his studio was tabooed, except on pressing business, from one till five o'clock. Mortimer alone was an exception to this rule. It was then that Paolo, secured against interruption, gave free scope to his fancy; it was then he would sketch his subjects, design groups, erase, begin anew, just as the tide of inspiration prompted. For the nonce, he was giving some finishing touches to his Brennus, and the other foreground figures. A rap at the door of the studio. —

"Come in," cried Paolo, taking it for granted that it must be Thornton. The clink of spurs on the floor — Thornton both rode and wore spurs — confirmed him in his belief.

"Well, Mortimer?" he exclaimed, painting on.

"But it is not Mortimer," cried a merry and sweet young voice close by his side.

As if he had received an electric shock, the artist started up, let fall his palette, and, turning round, found himself confronting a tall young lady in a riding-habit, and a middle-sized elderly gentleman in black. Poor shy Paolo stood transfixed, without a word to say, without even sufficient presence of mind to offer seats. All he did was to colour prodigiously, and feel the drops of perspiration rise on his brow.

"Excuse our intrusion," began the lady in Italian; but as her eyes fell on the group, at which Paolo had been at work, she stopped, clapped her hands, and burst out enthusiastically: "Oh, how beautiful! — this is exquisite! — look, uncle, look!"

The uncle looked through his eye-glass, and echoed, —

"Beautiful; yes, indeed; very beautiful!"

"Isn't it? it is a gem, a masterpiece. What lovely colouring! I don't pretend to be a judge, but it seems to me quite like a Domenichino."

"Oh! madam," protested Paolo, who, owing to this diversion, had had time to recover from his stupor.

"Indeed, I mean what I say," persisted the lady; "I am sure there is the same breadth, the same grand style —"

"Pray don't make me blush, — you compare a pigmy to a giant," said Paolo, offering a chair to each of his visitors.

"Oh! thank you," said the lady, declining the chair; "we are not going to stay, we must not rob you of time that you employ so well."

"May I at least have the honour of knowing —?"

"Who we are? Why, do you not guess? — how curious!" and her merry laugh showed Paolo a double range of pearly teeth; "do you not guess that it is Mr. Jones and his niece, Miss Lavinia Jones?"

"Indeed! the writer of the note I received this morning!" exclaimed Paolo, his face once more in a blaze. "I really did not take you for English, but for a countrywoman of my own. You speak Italian so well."

"Now, that is downright flattery; you know how to pay compliments."

"I do not," said Paolo; "I never flatter, never pay compliments."

"Not the very least little bit?" she persisted, in a pretty, coaxing voice.

"Never; not the least little bit," said Paolo, gravely repeating Miss Lavinia's own words.

"Then you are not like other men."

"How not so? — at least, I am like most of those I know."

Her eyes dived into his with a fixed look of curiously mingled surprise and incredulity. Perhaps so much simplicity in a man of Paolo's size struck her as not being natural; or, perhaps, she wondered what sort of primitive society he had fallen into. Paolo, who by this time had recovered his self-possession, stood her searching gaze bravely, nay, returned the fire.

"So you did not guess who we were?" resumed the girl, after a pause; "and, as for the reason of our visit, I daresay you guess that as little —"

Paolo guessed it, but he did not choose to say he did. The prospect of being obliged to refuse anything

to so charming a suitor was too disagreeable not to be avoided as long as possible.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I came to urge in person my written and refused petition of this morning. Now, pray, do not answer me yet, or I shall lose all the little stock of courage left me. The sight of that beautiful picture has already taken it almost all away. I feel how ridiculous it is to ask the person who can do such wonders, to stoop to give a girl like me lessons."

"Oh, it is not that —" began Paolo.

"Not yet, not yet," interrupted Miss Lavinia, with a wave of her hand, and a bend of the neck sideways, that might have put a swan to the blush. "I want first to explain and apologize. I assure you, I had not the smallest idea, when I wrote, that you were such a great painter. Your address was given to me before we left London, by a friend of mine, Lady Augusta Barr — perhaps you may remember her — you gave her lessons in 1848. It was only this morning, after receiving your note, that I found out, by inquiring at the English shop of engravings in the Corso, that Signor Paolo Mancini was the name of a celebrated artist."

"Indeed, Madam!"

"Yes, of a celebrated artist. This is my explanation — now for my apology. You will think, knowing what she knows, why did she not desist from plaguing me? I am but a woman, and women are always allured by difficulties. It took me nearly a fortnight to hunt out your address; not one of those stupid ciceroni, who pretend to know everything, could find you out. I suppose they never fancied, that the drawing master I sent them in search of, could be one and the

same as their great painter. Now, that I have found you at last, it would be very hard — wouldn't it? — to lose you directly. We hold to what has cost us trouble, — and then I am a silly, wilful thing, and you must forgive me."

There was an irresistible fascination in Lavinia's look, in her gestures, in the varying undulations of her rich soft voice, in the graceful harmony of all her being as she spoke. Our solitary young painter had never sat at such a feast. The spell, so new to him, acting on his brain, produced a gentle intoxication: who knows how long he might have remained silent, had not the young lady added with a quiet smile, and sitting down at last, — "Now, you may speak."

It was not an easy thing, considering what he had to say. He summoned all his courage, and stammered out, —

"It is I who ought to apologize. I wish you could know what it costs me to refuse — but really as to giving lessons, it is quite impossible."

The young lady frowned and bit her lips.

"Do not be afraid that I shall take up too much of your time. I will be the most discreet of pupils, grateful even for a short half-hour."

"It is not the time I grudge. Though busy enough," said Mancini, "I could afford an hour or so. But, — hear how I am situated: since I left off giving lessons, I have had plenty of applications, it seemed as if done on purpose. For, when, God knows, I wanted pupils badly enough, very few were to be had; but the moment I declined any, they flocked to me. Well, as I said, I have had plenty of applications, many of them backed by strong recommendations from friends of mine,

and to avoid offending some, I gave up all. Now you see that I could not make an exception in your favour, without behaving ill to others, and that I am sure you could not desire."

"Quite right, we will not have you do anything wrong," said Miss Lavinia; "I withdraw my original petition, and present another. Come and give me advice and direction now and then, will you?"

There was distilled into that "will you?" the very quintessence of all womanly grace and witchery. Paolo was very nearly conquered, but his conscience protested:

"You change the word," said he, smiling; "but you retain the substance."

"I will make my request still more modest," persevered Miss Jones. "Only allow me to show you my poor attempts — the nicest delicacy could not be hurt by your coming to our house."

These words "our house" evoked in Paolo's mind a whole phantasmagoria of powdered footmen, of fathers in white cravats, showy mothers in flounces, such as he had seen and suffered from, when giving lessons to Lady Augusta, and his courage revived.

"My habits are so retired —" he began.

Miss Lavinia did not allow him to go on.

"We are very quiet people," she said, "and surely you are not going to refuse a lady when she merely invites you to come and see her as a friend."

It was the *coup-de-grace*.

"Such a title offers too strong a temptation to be withstood," said Paolo, "I am at your disposal."

"That is really kind of you," exclaimed the girl,

colouring with pleasure. "Uncle, uncle — Signor Mancini consents to call and look over my daubs."

This was said in English, and with great animation. Uncle, who during this long dialogue had been taking an inventory of all the moveables in the studio, did not seem electrified by the intelligence, but contented himself with replying, —

"Does he? I am glad to hear it; he is very polite, I am sure. Now, shall we go?"

"When will you come?" asked Lavinia of Paolo; "will it be to-morrow at two o'clock?"

"To-morrow I am engaged."

"Then the day after?"

"With pleasure."

"Thank you, thank you," reiterated the young lady, cordially holding out her hand. Paolo shook it with English fervour.

"You have been wasting time and words," said Mr. Jones, to his niece, when they got downstairs.

"How to you mean *wasting*?" asked his niece. "I have secured a great artist as my drawing-master, and is that worth nothing?"

"You might have accomplished your purpose more easily and quickly, had you begun by the right end," said uncle.

"And pray what was the right end?"

"To have said simply and plainly, 'Name your own terms, sir; money is of no consideration to us.'"

"Oh! fie, uncle. You believe that money can do everything, and there's your mistake. You give me credit for some penetration, don't you? Then take my word for it, gold is not the lure that will catch this Signor Paolo."

"Pooh! pooh! pooh!" was the uncle's rejoinder, as he put her on her horse, "nonsense and romance, men are all alike."

Mr. Mark Jones was a matter-of-fact man, on whom romance had certainly no hold, however nonsense may have had. He believed in gold, worshipped gold, revered the possessors of gold; himself above all, Jones, the great gatherer of gold. Mr. Jones was the author of his own fortunes; his *début* in life having been of the humblest. As a lad of sixteen he had left his native village, and gone to London with but five shillings in his pocket. By dint of hard work, sharpness, self-denial, and no over-scrupulousness, young Jones managed, in the course of a dozen years, to swell his five shillings into a couple of thousand pounds. It was not a fortune, to be sure, but enough to form the foundation of one; the young man was ambitious. He was still looking about for a good start, when chance, or his lucky star, brought him, in the course of business, in contact with Mrs. Jarman, a buxom, good-natured, newly-made widow, the owner and manager of a fashionable Italian warehouse in one of the most fashionable quarters of the metropolis. Even now, at eight-and-forty, and in spite of a rather excessive development of the jaws, Mr. Jones was still a handsome man in his way. At eight-and-twenty he was superb; jetty hair, and whiskers to match, bright eyes, complexion ruddy and clear, and a leg! his leg was a matter of notoriety wherever he went. Mrs. Jarman was not insensible to all these perfections. Mr. Jones was not blind, and, in short, at the end of her mourning, Mrs. Jarman bestowed on him the golden key of her heart and strong box, and the name of Jones

figured in letters of gold by the side of that of Jarman.

The aspiring bridegroom infused new life into his bride's business. By an adroit system of bribes to the cooks of clubs and aristocratic families, he doubled the custom of the house in no time. Sauces, pickles, and truffles, were not sent out faster than silver and gold flowed in. A few years more and Mr. Jones saw himself the possessor of a large capital, and at once he extended his sphere of action. The moment could not have been more propitious for an ambitious speculator. It was in 1845 — 6 — that period when the whole nation was turned into gamblers — Mr. Jones launched out with the boldest, into railroad speculations, and realized immense profits; that is, he gambled and won. As he grew rich, so he grew ostentatious: the Italian warehouse, with Jarman and Jones, in letters of gold, became an eyesore to him, and he disposed of it very advantageously. The sum of money thus obtained was soon doubled and trebled. Whatever he undertook, let it be ever so rash, was sure to prosper. There are men whom fortune literally pelts with her favours, and Mr. Jones was one of them.

The world, which believes in nothing but success, applauds those who rise, and hisses those who fall, little knowing, or, indeed, caring to know, how often the capricious goddess lavishes her smiles on mediocrity, idleness, or worse, while she frowns on honest toil and industry, and even takes pleasure in frustrating the most energetic and well-directed efforts. Mr. Jones was an instance in point; the more he succeeded, the more he was pronounced worthy of succeeding. His enterprise, his activity, his skilful combinations, found

hosts of admirers and panegyrists. A few years more, and behold Mr. Jones chairman of a railway, founder and chief shareholder of a bank, a man enormously rich, a man whose name was of importance on 'Change.

Successful as he was, Mr. Jones had his private vexations. The first was that he had no children, nor hope of any, considering the age of his wife, full ten years older than himself. He had endeavoured to supply this want, by in a manner adopting his niece Lavinia. He had given her the best education that money could procure — he had come to love her as much as was in his nature to love — he was very proud of her, and it was generally supposed she would inherit his hundreds of thousands. Still Lavinia was, after all, only a *pis-aller*; and a son and heir of his own continued to be the unattainable object of Mr. Jones' sighs. Two other crumpled leaves in his bed of roses, were the humility of his beginnings in life, and his name. He was ashamed of both, and would fain have erased them, if he could, not only from the memory of others, but his own. His name especially was a perpetual blister to him. He fancied that ridicule attached itself to the innocent monosyllable — he would far rather have been called Nebuchadnezzar, than Jones. He loathed it, could not bear the sound of it, could not see it in print without a shudder. *The Times* and *Punch* were his everlasting bugbears. Did not they clothe their impersonations of all that was stupid and laughable in mankind, with the name of Jones? Could he have had his way, the managers of those papers would have fared but ill.

Since we are on the chapter of Mr. Jones' foibles, let us have our laugh out. Mr. Jones had met at the *table-d'hôte* of Hartmann's Hotel at Florence, where he and his family were for the time being located, a young Italian, announcing himself as a Roman. This gentleman being able, as he modestly expressed it, "to murder English a little," a sort of intimacy sprang up between him and Mr. Jones, whose own talents as a linguist were of the smallest. Cavaliere Martucci — such was the title and name of this Italian — had, however, something more magnetic for Mr. Jones than even the knowledge of Mr. Jones's native tongue. The magnet was the small gold cross which Cavaliere Martucci wore at his button-hole, and which he explained to be the insignia of the Roman order of St. Sylvester, a commandership of which conferred the title of Count Palatine.

"Difficult to obtain?" asked Mr. Jones, one day.

"Not so," was the answer; "any one of a good family might obtain it, that is, backed by interest of the right kind."

This information was not lost upon one who would willingly have given an eye for a title.

"And," pursued Mr. Jones, "could a Protestant belong to this order of St. Sylvester?"

"Certainly," answered the Cavaliere; "it was a most enlightened, tolerant order. Did his English friend contemplate an application in that direction?"

The English friend laughed one of his loudest laughs, as he said, —

"Why not? were it only for the fun of a Protestant wearing the Pope's colours."

Of this argument, the Cavaliere only seemed to comprehend that it was an affirmative, for he gravely rejoined, —

“That he should be too happy to gratify his excellent friend’s desire, and should certainly succeed by introducing Mr. Jones to a friend, a personage who could and would do anything for him (the Cavaliere). Perhaps Mr. Jones might already know, at least he must have heard of the family of Fortiguerra, one of the most ancient families of Italy. His friend was Count Mendez Fortiguerra, a nobleman most influential at the Court of his Holiness. Count Mendez,” continued the Cavaliere, “being now actually at his estates at Albano, Mr. Jones’s introduction to him must necessarily be delayed, until they should all meet at Rome, where he believed he was right in supposing Mr. Jones and his amiable ladies were to spend the winter.”

Nothing more was said between Mr. Jones and the Cavaliere on this point, but both felt there was a tacit agreement between them.

“How wide those chaps on ’Change will open their eyes,” thought the former, “if one of these days I appear among them a Count Palatine!”

CHAPTER VII.

The Eternal Pro and Con.

MISS LAVINIA'S visit had left Paolo in that state of bodily and mental titillation, which follows a pleasurable shock. He sat himself down on the chair she had occupied, shut his eyes like one who, dazzled by the sun, continues to see its reflection on the retina, and then, little by little, he fell into a reverie.

Thornton found him in the same position an hour after.

"Lazy?" said Thornton.

"Do you call a man lazy who does not work manually? If so, I think that Columbus and Newton must have been very lazy fellows. I am making a poem."

"And the hero is?"

"My hero is a heroine — Miss Lavinia Jones."

"What riddle is this?" asked Thornton.

"A riddle to you, profane, whose obtuse senses do not perceive the ambrosial fragrance she has left behind her. The queen, the fairy, the goddess, whom mortals call Lavinia, has been here, hallowing the very chair I am sitting on."

"Miss Jones has been here!" exclaimed Thornton.
"And what for?"

"For what do queens visit their subjects?" rejoined Paolo. "To order and be obeyed. For what do goddesses reveal themselves to mortals? Why, to be worshipped. She is both queen and deity, my dear friend. Nature gave her a crown of beauty; her gait reveals the goddess — *incessu patuit dea.*"

"If you would drop all these hyperboles, and condescend to make yourself intelligible —" remarked the Englishman.

"You tax me with hyperbole, as a blind man might one who sees, for descanting on the glories of the sun. Had you seen her, had you heard the music of her voice, had you felt the electric shock the touch of her hand gave, you would understand me, and share my worship."

"Faugh!" said Thornton. "Glory is the only woman worth courting and worshipping."

"Say rather that glory is only worth courting and worshipping — only likely to be attained for the sake of a woman. If you search deeply, my dear friend, you will discover that in all great achievements woman has been the inspiration."

Thornton answered gravely:

"If you were to put in the one scale all the achieved greatness inspired by woman, and in the other all the greatness prevented or nipped in the bud by her, you would see to which side the balance inclined. Let us speak seriously. Paolo, do you mean to pretend that you are in love with this Miss Lavinia Jones?"

"As much as may be at first sight," said Paolo, smiling. "If it is a rose, it will bloom with time, as the saying is with us Italians. I wish you would not look so alarmed."

"I wish you would not take love for a plaything; it is like playing with poison."

"Ih! ih!" cried Paolo, laughing.

"Yes," continued Thornton, "I would rather see you with a fit of ague than in love. Ague at the worst might kill your body, while love —"

"While love?" interrogated Mancini.

"While love leaves your soul a cripple for life," wound up Thornton. "But you have not answered my question. What was the lady's object in coming here after your note of refusal?"

Paolo related to his friend all the particulars of the conversation he had had with Miss Lavinia, and the promise she had in some sort wrenched from him. Thornton looked mightily displeased at this upshot. Waste of precious time, neglect of his profession, the ill-will of those to whom Paolo had declined to give lessons, these were the inevitable consequences, setting aside the possibility of more bitter ones, which, according to Thornton, were to be the result of Paolo's acquiescence.

"Upon my honour," observed the young man, sedately, "I do not deserve to be scolded. Short of being unmannerly, nay, downright rude, I could not decline a request couched in such flattering terms. I could not have done so had Miss Lavinia been as plain as she was handsome."

"If that's the case, if you had no alternative, then the conclusion I come to is, that Miss Lavinia outstepped the limits of propriety."

"Pray," entreated Paolo, "do not judge her so harshly; she does not deserve it. For nearly a fortnight she has been searching all Rome for me, you see; she had set her heart on having her friend's drawing-master as hers also. All she said was kindly meant; and were I still a poor teacher, how thankful I should be! The alteration in my circumstances is no reason why I should not feel kindness."

Thornton did not answer. After musing awhile, he said:

"You are a good fellow, Paolo, much better than I am. Did I not know how extreme you are —"

"Like an Englishman," murmured Paolo, slyly.

"Yes, minus the organ of caution. Well, did I not know how extreme you are, I would not fret and plague you as I do."

"Come, come," said Paolo, with a look at Thornton full of affection, "don't be uneasy on my account. I am twenty-four, and neither a child to be dazzled by a brilliant meteor, nor yet a lucifer match to blaze up at the sight of every pretty woman I meet. Besides, you ought to set down something to the enthusiasm of an artist, brought face to face with an exquisite type of beauty. You will admire her as much as I do when you see her. Soft blue eyes, and raven black hair — a pearly complexion, with those tender blue shades about the temples and throat so dear to painters — the brow of a Juno, large eyelids with long lashes — such combination of majesty and grace is a godsend to a devotee of the beautiful. What would I not give to be allowed to take her picture! I am sure I could make a *chef d'œuvre* of it, I am sure I could."

"Stick to your Brennus, and leave portraits alone, that's my advice to you," said Thornton. "Courting danger is the trade of a fool. Oh! that I could give you a little of my experience!"

"A sad present that would be," remarked the Roman. "As far as I see, experience is but another word for mistrust of our fellow-creatures."

"Too true," said Thornton, with a sigh; "but what if safety is only at that cost?"

"Is love, then, a pit of perdition?"

"To such as you it is certain disappointment," pronounced Thornton. "The same *beau idéal* you seek in art, you will seek in woman, and not find it. The all-absorbing exclusive love you dream of, is not a flower of this earth. The moment you believe yourself enthroned in a woman's heart, the moment you imagine yourself all the world to her, as she is to you — there comes between you the fluttering of a brilliant butterfly, the music of a polka, or a glance from some demigod with a star on his breast, anything, in short, that happens to excite her fancy or tickle her vanity; and you are thrown into the shade from which, when you emerge into light again, not the less welcome for having been abolished for awhile, you learn that far from being her life, you are merely an accident in her life, and that your empire is shared by her poodle and her milliner."

"That there are such women as you describe, I have no more doubt, than that they are the exception and not the rule."

"In that you are mistaken — those you call the exception, are, on the contrary the rule, from which I don't deny there may be some few rare exceptions. Novelty and glitter are irresistible attractions to the fair sex. Noise and flutter are such accomplishments as they cannot withstand, says Addison, not I. It is a matter of organization. There is a predominant element in them, call it mobility, plasticity, impressibility, excitability, what you like; for my part, I call it frivolity — which is utterly incompatible with anything deep-rooted and settled."

"Are we men so exempt from frivolity or inconstancy, as to feel ourselves entitled to throw stones into

our neighbour's garden on either score?" asked Paolo. "I know in what women do far outstrip us — I know one excellence at least, in which women leave us far behind — I mean in that heroism, which recoils from no toil, no sacrifice, to relieve those who suffer — the heroism you so much admired in our women tending the sick and wounded in 1849."

"Granted," said Thornton; "unhappily, the world, as it is, affords but small scope for the exercise of the chivalrous, compared with the unlimited one it offers to that of the frivolous element; the result being, that women enlist their chivalry into the service of their frivolity. Their life is a perpetual sacrifice to a most exacting goddess — Fashion. For her they freeze in winter, and burn in summer; for her they carry a bulk of clothes that a porter would decline, and pinch and martyrize themselves at all seasons."

"There is truth in what you allege," quoth Paolo; "but whose is the fault? The fault is ours. If, instead of crying, 'Bravo!' and clapping our hands at such unnatural exhibitions, we hissed and turned from them in disgust, do you not think there would soon be an end of them?"

"Probably," said Thornton; "and the moral is that there is not a pin to choose between the one sex and the other."

Upon which consoling conclusion, our two friends separated.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Lavinia's Diary.

"Rome, Piazza di Spagna,
Hôtel de la Ville de Londres.

"MY DEAR LADY AUGUSTA,

"I HOPE my hurried scrawl from Leghorn has reached you. It was to announce our sudden flight from Florence. I cannot call it by any other name. It had been settled, you know, that we were not to go to Rome before the end of October. Very well! we lived in that belief up to last Monday, but we had reckoned without Lord Berriton. 'Lord Berriton?' you repeat: 'a tall fat man, with an odious brogue! What could he have to do with your plans?'

"That is just what I am going to explain: On Monday evening we were eating ices at the Cascine, when a voice exclaimed, 'Old Jones of Piccadilly, I declare!' and up came the speaker to Mr. Jones — I shall never call him uncle again. I never saw un—, Mr. Jones, I mean, so taken aback, then so obsequious; he could not stand upright before this old acquaintance of his. A truant boy could not have looked more crestfallen in the presence of his schoolmaster. The nobleman, with his impertinent, patronizing airs, was to the full as meanly odious as Mr. Jones; but he did not belong to me, so I did not care. His lordship seemed inclined to commence a conversation with me, but I did not choose it, under the rude stares the two ladies with him, horribly vulgar they looked, were giving both aunt and me — just as if we were two strange, newly-imported animals. 'Ah, well, Jones,'

bawled my lord, 'I have taken apartments here in Florence for six months. I hope to see you again,' with a glance at me. Mr. Jones, to my surprise, answered that his lordship was very good, but that we were going on to Rome directly.

"During the whole of our drive back to Florence, Mr. Jones never opened his lips, but when we reached the hotel, he said curtly, 'Have your trunks packed at once, ladies, we are off in the morning for Rome.' I thought at first it was a bad joke. I needn't tell you that I protested energetically. I said it was downright madness to brave the Campagna under a scorching August sun. Strong healthy people scarcely would attempt such a journey, it would be the death of aunt. It was like talking to a lamp-post. 'If you choose to stay you are welcome to do so; I am off to-morrow morning for Leghorn,' and with this ultimatum he went to his own room. I was for staying, but aunt, as usual, was for yielding. So to Leghorn we went, got on board the Sully steamer, and by break of the next day landed at Civita Vecchia. Thank God, we had plenty of rain on the road to Rome; and here we are. Now, what do you think of tyranny like this?

* * * * *

"A melancholy but a wonderful city — well named the Eternal. It looks as if built by giants to last an eternity. How little one feels oneself amid this antique grandeur! It gives me a feeling something like that I had when I saw the Jungfrau for the first time. I have spent these two last days tearing through Rome, sometimes with aunt, oftener with Grace, my maid. I won't have anything to do with Mr. Jones — lucky for him that aunt is pretty well. To-morrow we are to go and

see an apartment in the Corso, approved by Mr. Jones, not the more likely to please me; it must be something wonderful indeed, if I don't find fault with it. My dear, the swarm of monks and priests is incredible; I saw a beautiful Capuchin this morning. I mean to make a picture of him from memory. I have sent a *valet de place* to Via dei Macelli in quest of your old drawing-master, whom I mean to give me lessons.

* * * * *

"Really, the apartment is unobjectionable, so it is taken for three months. We are to remove there to-morrow. It is beautifully situated in the Corso, plenty of light and air and space. Old-fashioned heavy furniture which I rather like. Via dei Macelli does not know Signor Mancini any more. The *valet de place* promises to unearth him though, if he be still of this world. Yesterday and to-day a good round of sight-seeing. Grand, grand, grand — to-morrow is to be a shopping day, piano and harp to hire, brushes and colours and canvas to buy, a circulating library to search out, — the evenings are dull enough.

* * * * *

"Corso, Palazzo Morlacchi.

"My diary bids fair to be of a happy, neutral tint. *Les jours se suivent et ... se ressemblent*. No: not the days, but the evenings. Sight-seeing agreeably enough occupies the one, for my enthusiasm for this wonderful city continues unabated — it withstands even the professional twang of the cicerones; but the evenings, my dear Augusta, the evenings are eternities — heavy, heavy, heavy. You will understand the how and the wherefore when I add — and we spend them almost

all *en famille*. Rome swarms with people of all nations, with English of course, but we have made no acquaintances with any of them, and to the few Roman families who see company, we have no introductions. The only one of the aborigines with whom I have had the power of exchanging a word besides the horrid cicerones, is the old gentleman, from whom we have hired the first floor of this palace — at an enormous price, so uncle says. Our banker Prince Torlonia — how odd that a banker should be a prince, and a prince go on with banking — is just now in mourning, and sees nobody. Uncle is expecting Chevalier Martucci, that man we got acquainted with in Florence — I told you about him in one of my last letters. He is to introduce us to a Roman count, who is to be our godfather, and answer for us in the best set in Rome. *En attendant*, we spend the evenings at home, aunt yawning over her crochet, uncle worshipping *The Times* and his brandy-and-water; and I — going from the piano to the harp, like *une âme en peine*. This life of unnatural seclusion irritates my nerves, and spoils my beauty. I am not joking; it really does, I feel I am getting old, ugly, and disagreeable. How can a woman go on looking handsome, if there is no one to admire her? For a wonder, last evening we went to a concert at the Metastasio. I rather enjoyed the music, but the hall itself is unbearable, so stupidly arranged, so ill-lighted. Fancy being shut up in a dark box, where nobody can see you! What a difference from her Majesty's in London, or from the Italian Opera in Paris! It is worth dressing well and looking well to go to those parterres of living flowers. By-the-by, I cannot find your drawing-master, he has left his old lodging,

and is gone no one knows where. It is very provoking, for even if I did not do much in the painting line, it would have been one way of practising my Italian. Everything goes wrong with me just now. I have promised a fabulous reward to the *valets de place* if they unearth Signor Mancini for me: I hate to be beat in anything. However, it is ten, and I am going to bed. Isn't it ridiculous? I shall not send this scrawl for a day or two, in the hope of something coming to pass, that will let me end with a flourish.

* * * * *

"Caught him, and carried him by storm! I may say with Cæsar — *veni, vidi, vici*. I am quite charmed with my success, but is it such a long story, and I am so pressed for time, that I shall never be able to make you understand what a battle I have won. I only had his address this morning, and directly I got it, I despatched a most polite note — I have not said who the *he* was, but of course you guess — Signor Mancini. Drawing-master, indeed! Bless your dear little heart, he is one of the first painters in Rome; think of my telling him he was another Domenichino. Upon my honour, I meant it; I wish you could see the picture he is painting now — it's a miracle, that's my belief. Well, I sent my note with compliments *et cetera*, and received a laconic answer that Signor Paolo Mancini had left off giving lessons, and consequently would not give any to Miss Lavinia Jones. I was very angry with the substance, manner, and appearance of this missive. A few words in pencil on the blank page, observe, of my own note, — no envelope, no seal; a mere unceremonious three-cornered note, was all the gentleman deigned to send me. Cæsar, looking twice as black as usual, gave

me a report of the way he was received, that did not tend to mollify my anger — anger is rather a strong word — let us say my pique. He said that going into the studio was like going into a den of thieves, such an uproar of talking and laughing, he was sure they were making fun of him. Honest Cæsar is, to be sure, an odd-looking mortal, yet one does not like to have one's servants turned into ridicule. Ah! ah! Signor Paolo, thought I to myself, is this the way you treat a lady's message, and a lady's messenger? We shall see who will have the best of it; and a little plot budded in my head. Don't be alarmed, I have not offended against the rules of propriety.

"Uncle and I were just going out for a ride, to try two new horses. Uncle is *aux petits soins* to make it up with me. We went down the Corso, and as we were passing the English shop of engravings, the thought crossed me to stop and make some inquiries about this Signor Mancini. Could they tell me anything of a master of that name? Signor Mancini!!! The three notes of admiration stand for raised eyebrows, eyes wide opened, and an enormous 'Anzi;' Signor Paolo Mancini was one of the ornaments of Rome, a great painter, a celebrated artist; as for his giving lessons, that, of course, was out of the question. I suppose I ought to have been satisfied, and modestly asked for some other minor celebrity to be my instructor; but I seldom do what I ought, and I like best what is difficult to get; so, during a two hours' ride, I matured my project. Only let me see this painter, thinks I. My horse was spirited, and it was as much as I could do to manage him. The struggle heated and excited me. I felt in one of my *irresistible* moods, as you call them, and re-

solved to try my chance at once. I easily persuaded uncle to accompany me to Via Frattina, where Signor Paolo has his studio.

“Fortunately he was alone; and so engrossed with his painting that he never heard us go into the room, or took us for somebody else. The sound of my voice made him start as if it had been the last trumpet; up he jumped, turned round, and, instead of the spare little lad you had described to me, I found myself confronted by a tall commanding figure, with one of those large archangel’s heads, that one sees so constantly in the Sistine Chapel. We tall women feel quite at ease before diminutive specimens of mankind, upon whom we can look down. But here the parts were reversed; it was I who had to look up, and my antagonist, who looked down on me from his altitude of six feet. Under these circumstances, my presence of mind forsook me for one moment; in the next I made a diversion by an exclamation about the picture on his easel. The only part finished was a group of four figures; such figures — quite splendid. I was enthusiastic in my praise; real, unfeigned enthusiasm, remember, though all the while I was studying the painter as well. I saw his colour come and go like a girl’s, with pleasure and embarrassment. His hands trembled a little. It is a pity I have no time to recount all my skilful evolutions; suffice it to say I acted upon the principle that one must ask a great deal in order to obtain a little. The defence of the enemy, I must own, was long and obstinate. I had to sing tunes in every key, *arias di bravura*, *adagios*, *cantabiles*, before finding the right one; it was a *rallentando smorzato* in A minor, that won the day for me. By the terms of the capitulation, my Do-

menichino condescends to call on us as a friend, and see my daubs; which means, translated into good English, that before a week is over, he will be the most assiduous and devoted of living drawing-masters, or my name is not Lavinia. You see that, at any rate, my vengeance is not so terrible. Modesty apart, more than one of my acquaintance would envy him his post; wouldn't they?

"Ever yours in haste,

"LAVINIA.

"P. S. — I forgot to tell you that he took me for a countrywoman of his own on the strength of my Italian. His is music spoken, real *Lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*. Adieu in haste. I am in better spirits already."

CHAPTER IX.

Paolo lands in Terra Incognita.

ON the day appointed for his first visit to Miss Lavinia, Paolo, about two o'clock in the afternoon, left his studio, and sauntered along the Corso, in the direction of Palazzo Morlacchi. His step was slow, perhaps reluctant, as the step of a shy man always is, when going for the first time to meet strangers. If we are to speak candidly, Paolo would have given something at this moment, even the pleasure of seeing beautiful Miss Lavinia again, to have escaped the consequences of his promise. He would have been thankful for a respite: who knows but that she may be out, thought he, and at the thought he felt relieved.

Paolo was shy, not timid; the one does not imply the other, and, though often united, the two things are as often separated. He would, for instance, have gone to the Vatican, and told his Holiness a piece of his mind, frankly and fearlessly; but not the less would he have felt awkward and embarrassed at walking through the halls, among the guards and domestics. Timidity may be controlled by reason, or conquered by force of habit, as we see daily exemplified in young soldiers. Not so shyness. Reason and habit have no more hold on this infirmity than they have upon the hunch on your back or the wart on your cheek. It is a kind of constitutional disease, a sort of *tic-douloureux sui generis*, for which there is no cure possible. All that one can do is to check, by strength of will, its outward manifestation: an effort often mistaken for pride. The Marquis De Custine, in his work on "Russia," avers that the Emperor Nicholas was very shy. This statement, if correct, would go far to prove the truth of our distinction between timidity and shyness, as well as the peculiar nature and incurability of this last malady; for if ever there was a man far from timid, and necessarily familiar with public pomps and shows, a man feeling himself above criticism, in short, one with less reason for being shy, that man was the Emperor Nicholas.

The porter said that the English family were out. Here was a relief and a respite for Paolo, not unmingled with a shade of disappointment though. We are such contradictory creatures, that we scarcely ever know what we really wish for or what we do not. Is there, said Paolo to himself, to be no end to this annoyance? Heaven knows how much time I am to waste in dancing attendance upon this lady; heaven knows how long I

am to have this sword of Damocles hanging over me. I was wrong to accept this invitation. Mortimer was right; he always is.

As he turned out of the gate, muttering this incongruous soliloquy, he saw out of the corner of his eye a carriage full of people, and one of whom was Miss Lavinia, coming in his direction. The prospect of having to salaam in the open street, amid a crowd of her acquaintances, almost gave him a vertigo, and he hastened, as if for life, in the opposite direction. But to no avail. Miss Lavinia's eyes were apparently as sharp as his own. He was speedily overtaken by a quick step, and the black silhouette of panting Cæsar displayed itself over his shoulder. "Miss at home, sir; please, miss at home." There was nothing for it, but to turn round and face the enemy.

The course of shy people never does run smooth. The simplest act on their part, the leaving a card with a porter, or the getting into a *vettura* for Albano, is sure to be complicated by some aggravating circumstance. An introduction to these people in the privacy of a drawing-room would have been as roses compared to the thorns with which this public exhibition was fraught. These and such like confused reflections were put an end to by the silvery voice of Miss Lavinia, saying, "Oh! Signor Paolo, there's no use running away; you are fairly our prisoner," and out came the lily hand to meet and shake his own. "Mrs. Jones, my aunt, who is quite impatient to make your acquaintance, and is half jealous at my being beforehand with her." Mrs. Jones, a short, plump, handsome blonde, with a most agreeable face, said something gracious in broken French, and also shook Paolo heartily by the

hand. "The rest of the introductions," added Miss Jones, "we may as well reserve for upstairs."

A gentleman, who had been one of the occupants of the Jones's carriage, had offered his arm to Mrs. Jones, Mr. Jones had already a lady under his convoy, so that Paolo and Lavinia were left standing together.

"Shall I be your guide, Signor Paolo?" asked she good-humouredly.

The young painter had not the courage to take the hint, and offer her his arm in imitation of the other gentlemen. So they marched up the stairs singly, and entered the saloon. Here Miss Lavinia introduced Paolo to the rest of the company.

"Mr. Piper, Mrs. Piper, Signor Paolo Mancini:" adding in a lower voice, "one of the first painters in Rome."

Mr. Piper was very happy, Mrs. Piper was very fortunate. "Mrs. Piper is a capital Italian scholar, Signor Paolo," went on Lavinia.

"Uncle, here is signor Paolo, who has been good enough to remember his promise."

Mr. Jones had gone to the mantelpiece to examine the letters and papers lying on it, and this address was a reminder that he had not yet welcomed Paolo.

"Much obliged to him, I am sure," said Mr. Jones, shaking hands with the visitor.

Paolo still off his balance, and trying to recover himself, was not so self-engrossed, but that he was sensible of Lavinia's considerate care to make his reception pleasant, and able to admire her perfect ease and grace in doing the honours of the house.

A general move among the company, the purport of which he was unable to fathom, threw him into fresh perplexity. He rose, however, because he saw everyone do so.

"We are going to luncheon," explained Miss Lavinia.

Paolo smiled vacantly, as though highly pleased with the announcement, but froze inwardly at the prospect of locomotion. He saw Mr. Piper offer his arm to Miss Lavinia, and he surmised that it might be his duty to offer his to his nearest neighbour, who happened to be Mrs. Jones; but he *could* not bring himself to do so. Such physical impossibilities do exist for a shy man; Lavinia came to the rescue.

"You had better take my aunt," she said to Mr. Piper, "she does not speak Italian."

Paolo could have kissed the hem of her dress. The next moment, scarcely knowing how it had been managed, he found himself seated at table between Miss Lavinia and Mrs. Piper.

Mr. Piper and his wife had much to say about the detestable accommodation on the road. Mr. Jones echoed their lamentations. Mrs. Jones put in a word or two in extenuation, while Miss Lavinia seized the opportunity so say to Paolo, under cover of their voices, —

"I was so afraid of missing you, that I had intended not to stir from home all day, but I was obliged to go and help these newly arrived friends of ours to take an apartment."

Paolo mentally called himself all sorts of names for the grumblings and innuendoes he had given vent to, on finding the family were out.

"Who told you to open that window, sir?" roared Mr. Jones to a servant he caught in *flagranti &c.*

"I did, my dear," said Mrs. Jones, submissively; "it is so close here I can scarcely breathe."

"You might have had the goodness to observe," rejoined the husband, in a bitter sweet tone, "that I am sitting between the door and window, exactly in the draught."

"I beg your pardon. Shut that window, Cæsar," said Mrs. Jones.

She suffered from asthma, and never could have enough of fresh air, while Mr. Jones was in a perspiration from morning till night, and above all things feared a draught of air: hence two irreconcilable tendencies, which gave rise to ludicrous, and now and then, to painful scenes.

"I think I can manage to divide the difference," said Lavinia, smiling.

She went to another window, a long French window, opened the side that could not affect her uncle, and so gave satisfaction to both parties.

"Have you made much progress with your picture?" said she to Paolo on resuming her seat.

"Not much," replied Paolo. "I have scarcely touched it."

"We must take you to see it, Mrs. Piper," continued Lavinia, "that is, if Signor Paolo is good enough to allow us."

"By all means; my only regret is that there is so little worth seeing," returned Paolo.

"What is the subject, may I ask?" said Mrs. Piper.

"Brennus at the gates of Rome," answered Paolo.

"Do you devote yourself entirely to classical subjects?" simpered Mrs. Piper.

"Being a painter, where can I find better ones?" asked Paolo. "Great deeds, the noblest types of beauty, and picturesque costumes are three great desiderata, and I think you will allow that they are to be met with in greater plenty and perfection in what you term classical subjects than in any other."

"I agree with you," rejoined Mrs. Piper, "in so far as form and colour are concerned."

"Two rather important items in painting, I should say," remarked Paolo, smiling.

"Certainly; but the soul, sir, the soul," emphasized Mrs. Piper, with demure enthusiasm; "the halo of Christianity is still more important to me, and this is nowhere to be found but in modern and contemporaneous events."

Paolo did not quite understand the lady's meaning, so he said, —

"It may be so; after all, I have no objection to modern subjects."

"If so, I have a beautiful one to propose to you. The Madiais — there's a subject for a painter!"

"The Madiais!" echoed Paolo, rather startled. "I do not perceive—"

"Ah, sir! you would feel at once all that there is in such a subject, had you seen them as I did."

"Have you really seen them?" asked aunt and niece together.

"Yes, I saw them at Florence, not a fortnight ago," replied Mrs. Piper, laconically.

"And so did I," broke in Mr. Piper, who had not spoken till now.

The Madaiais were Mrs. Piper's specialty, her *cheval de bataille*. All topics served Mrs. Piper as channels of transition to the Madaiais. She went on to give an account of the Florentine martyrs, as she styled them, and of their sufferings which, commonplace as it was, and wanting in positive information, would have led any one to believe by implication, from the reticences of the speaker, and from her high-wrought tone, that the unfortunate couple had been put to the rack and broken on the wheel in her very presence. "They bear it so gently, hum, hum! so meekly, so full of faith; hum, hum! like true Christians, hum, hum!" wound up the orator. These hums, hums! were gurgling sounds between a moan and a sob, which were meant to express feelings at a high pressure.

The effect was tremendous. Mrs. Jones had tears in her eyes, Lavinia cried out it was a shame; even Mr. Jones looked indignant. Paolo alone sat cold and silent. Mrs. Piper's display of sensibility, her simpering, her cooing, jarred with his simple notions of what was true and natural, and grated upon his nerves. Above all things, Paolo hated affectation. He knew, too, of incidents of almost daily occurrence allowed to pass unheeded and unpitied, to which this affair of the Madaiais, sad and odious as it was, was a mere nothing.

"Well, Signor Paolo," recommenced Mrs. Piper after a pause, "does my subject take your fancy?"

"I am afraid," said Paolo, "we painters are apt only to adopt subjects of our own choosing."

"Perhaps Signor Mancini took no interest in the Madaiais," insinuated the lady.

Of course he did, but honest Paolo added, "He

feared over zealous sympathizers might spoil a good cause."

Mrs. Piper pursed up her lips, Lavinia coloured, and by way of changing the conversation, asked Paolo to give her an idea of what Garibaldi was like. Paolo not only described the appearance of the gallant general, but spoke warmly of his amiable temper, and gentlemanly manners in private life.

To talk of Garibaldi led of itself to talk of the defence of Rome. Paolo discussed the subject with modest pride, never hinting that he had himself taken his share of the perils.

"The Romans," he said, in answer to the praise bestowed on their gallantry, "had only done their duty, and would never fail to do it, whenever an opportunity offered. Had not one of their own poets sung, that it was sweet and honourable to die for one's country?"

Mr. Piper, who followed Paolo's Italian with difficulty, caught at this quotation made in Latin, to say to his *vis-à-vis*, Mr. Jones, in an explanatory tone:

"Really, we must allow that these Romans did show a good deal of pluck."

"Romans?" repeated Mr. Jones, shrugging his shoulders; "the half of them were foreigners."

Paolo was familiar enough with the English language, perfectly to seize the taunt in these words, even without the elucidating shrug of the speaker's shoulders. He coloured, and, addressing himself to Miss Lavinia, said with a certain animation:

"Suppose London were threatened by an enemy, and that people from your several counties flocked

thither to its defence, would you say that London had been defended by foreigners?"

"Certainly not," answered Miss Lavinia; "the people in the counties are as much English as the inhabitants of London."

"The same thing holds good with us," continued Paolo; "whether we are born in Milan, Turin, Naples, or Rome, little matters; we are all of the same race, blood, and language; all Italians. Why then does Mr. Jones say that most of the defenders of Rome were foreigners?"

"It is a mistake of his," said Lavinia; "our notions about Italy are rather misty, I must own."

"I wish I could speak English as well as I can understand it," observed Paolo, "that I might rectify Mr. Jones's misconception on the subject."

An awkward silence ensued. The mention of Mr. Jones's name, which recurred in Paolo's speech, the somewhat resentful tones of his voice, and the glances now and then darted by the speaker in the direction of Mr. Jones, made this latter aware that he had done or said something open to criticism, which the former took the liberty of actually criticizing. Now Mr. Jones, like many other people, did not like criticism applied to himself; and especially from an obscure painter, who but yesterday was giving lessons, and had for the first time been allowed the honour of a seat at his table. The consequence was that Mr. Jones looked mightily displeased, and wrote Paolo down in his black book.

Thus Paolo, in the first half hour of his *début* in the English family, had succeeded in securing two adversaries, Mrs. Piper and Mr. Jones. "Honesty is the best policy," is a golden saying, which answers per-

fectly well in so far as a clear conscience is concerned, and the satisfaction which is derived from that; but embark on it on your voyage of circumnavigation round the world, and for all practical purposes, see what a leaky craft it will prove.

At all events, Paolo had secured a friend in Mrs. Jones: there she sat opposite to him, as round, as plump, as innocent-looking as a quail, shooting fat and benevolence from every pore. There was something encouraging in her eye, which had been scarcely diverted from the young painter during luncheon time, something motherly in her smile. This decided sympathy had a special cause, independent of her good and gentle nature. Mrs. Jones had discovered at a glance that Paolo was very shy, and that he suffered from his shyness; and being herself a victim to this indefinable infirmity, she had felt for him the more keenly, because she felt for herself at the same time: *Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco*. Ever since she had been forced to abdicate her throne at the pickle-shop, and been launched into the great world, Mrs. Jones had never enjoyed a moment's peace. She felt displaced in her new region, her grandeur an embarrassment, the perpetual representation she was doomed to, a bore, her life a continual effort and restraint. Her feelings towards her husband were of mixed and contradictory character; he was to her a genius, the ideal of perfection, worthy of worship, and at the same time a scarecrow, in whose presence she was for ever in a tremble lest she should blunder. The constant strain on her mind, and the abandonment of her healthy and busy habits of yore, had told sorely on her constitution, and had made her delicate. She grew fatter and

more sluggish every day, and subject to alarming fits of asthma and suffocation. The great joy and pride and comfort of her life was her husband's niece, who was really devotedly attached to her aunt.

The lucheon at last came to an end, and the company rose from table. Miss Lavinia apologized to the Pipers for leaving them, but she had something she wished to show Signor Mancini, and she could not venture to waste his precious time. Paolo followed her through a suite of rooms to a very spacious one, in which was a smartly dressed young lady, sitting by one of the windows, embroidering. Taking this person for one of the family, Paolo was going to make a low bow, when he was prevented in time by Miss Lavinia saying carelessly, —

“It is only my maid.”

He noticed a harp, an open piano, with music on the desk, and heaps of music on a stand by its side, and a well-filled bookshelf.

“This is my study and library,” said Miss Lavinia; “and this,” going towards the second window, “is my atelier — rather a circumscribed one, but in proportion to the abilities of the student.”

What she called her atelier, comprised the embrasure of the window, which was very deep, and perhaps the fourth part of the room, from which it was partitioned by a screen. There was plenty of space in it for a sofa, several chairs, a small table, and an easel.

“If I am to augur of the ability of the painter by the size of the atelier,” said Paolo, “it cannot be so little.”

“Now, I appeal to your indulgence,” said Miss Lavinia, drawing back the curtain, which concealed

the canvas on the easel, and blushing celestial rosy red. The picture represented an old Capuchin friar, size of life.

"Ah! you paint in oils," said he; "it is hard work, but the most satisfactory in the end." After a moment's pause, he added, — "You have had no model, I perceive, and as yet you cannot do without. You had better hire one, there are plenty to be had — at rather a high price, to be sure, for they are very exacting with foreigners; but I dare say you will not mind a scudo or two."

"Oh! no," replied Lavinia, with a slightly roguish smile, "my difficulty has not been the money. I had nobody but cicerones to apply to, and I was afraid to trust to their recommendations."

"I will send you a model, if you like," said Paolo; "a handsome old man with a beautiful beard, just what you require for your Capuchin."

"Pray do," said Lavinia.

Paolo found little to praise, and much so find fault with in Lavinia's picture. The design was tolerably good, but the colouring bad — the drapery quite a failure. She used too many colours; blue, yellow, with some white and red, were quite enough for beginners. There was also great stiffness in the lines, as if the hand did not work freely. Would she take a brush, and let him see her manner of using it? Miss Lavinia put on her blouse, and began to paint.

"Ah!" says Paolo, "I see what it is: you grasp your brush too tightly."

She tried to hold it less firmly, but only succeeded in letting it drop.

"I will show you," said he; "give me your brush, if you please."

"Are you not afraid of getting some of the paint on your coat?"

"No; not with merely a few strokes," he replied.

"Why shouldn't you put on my blouse?" asked the young lady.

"Why not, indeed?" said the young man, and the transfer was effected, not without some little laughter from both parties. Paolo, long after he had shown her how she ought to hold her brush, went on as if in sport, touching the picture first here, then there, until the old monk looked quite another creature.

Mrs. Jones coming in, and finding him thus occupied, sat herself down quietly on the sofa, and gazed complacently at him.

"Isn't she very clever?" asked she, of Paolo, after a while, drawing her niece towards her, and giving her fair cheek a kiss.

"Oh! aunt," protested Lavinia, returning the kiss.

"And as good as clever, I can assure you, Mr. Paolo."

"Indeed, I do not doubt it," said Paolo, rather fervently, taking off the blouse, and sitting down at the little table. The two women holding each other by the hand, formed a graceful group; the contrast of the two heads could not be greater, or more piquant: raven-haired the one, full of character, decision and passion; all soft fading hues the other, breathing softness, sweetness and melancholy. A sun rising on a fiery July morning, a sun setting on a calm October evening.

Paolo, continuing the conversation, took up a pencil, a sheet of paper was lying temptingly under his hand; in a quarter of an hour he had made a sketch of the two ladies, and showed it to Mrs. Jones. No wonder she was in raptures with it, for it was a little masterpiece. She begged him to put his name to it, which he did, with a protestation against its being worth keeping.

Lavinia let Paolo look over her sketch book, showed him twenty volumes of French, Italian and German, which she said she was then reading, and on Paolo's expressing some wonder at her undertaking so much at once, she affirmed that she found time for all she wanted to do. What an active mind! thought Paolo, and thus they chatted on. Paolo was not a little astonished that he should feel himself, as it were, quite at home.

"Do you play the harp?" asked he. "I saw one as I came into the room."

"I like it as an accompaniment for the voice," said Lavinia: "shall I sing you something?"

"It would be a great favour," said Paolo.

She sat down to the harp, and preluded on it. She was beautiful thus, her attitude bringing out in relief the chaste outlines of her figure. Paolo could not help saying, —

"You make me think of Corinne."

"Do I?" answered Lavinia, blushing, though well accustomed to compliments. "What shall I sing?"

"Anything; only I pray you, let it be simple and melancholy."

Lavinia thought a little, then sang, — "She's far from the land where her young lover sleeps," one of the sweetest of the Irish melodies. Paolo drank in

eagerly every note of that superb voice. The winning simplicity, and touching melancholy of the air, went straight to his heart, and sent tears to his eyes.

"You remind me now of Frezzolini, when, as Desdemona, she sings the song of the willow," he said, after a silence more eloquent than words.

Lavinia held up her finger threateningly, —

"Flatterer!"

"Did I not tell you," said Paolo, "that I never pay compliments?"

He rose to take leave.

"When will you come again?" inquired Lavinia.

Paolo hesitated.

"You promised to find me a model, you know," she went on.

"I shall not forget," he answered.

"Then you will come again not later than the day after to-morrow."

What could Paolo do but agree? Aunt and niece went with him through a private passage communicating with the hall.

"When you are so kind as to pay us a visit," said considerate Mrs. Jones, "should you prefer avoiding the round by the drawing-room, the servants shall have orders to show you in this way."

"Thank you," said Paolo, greatly relieved at the prospect of coming and going without meeting Mr. Jones. "Thank you very much."

"What a charming, clever creature he is!" exclaimed kind-hearted Mrs. Jones, as soon as Paolo was out of hearing.

"Yes," echoed Lavinia, "a charming — *enfant terrible!*"

I only wish he would not wear such clod-hopper's shoes."

"You ungrateful, silly thing, to be thinking of his shoes!" said the aunt, laughing.

Paolo meanwhile, as light as a feather, was hastening in search of the model.

"If it were not for that grim Mr. Jones, and those horrid footmen of his, it would be a treat to spend an hour or so every day with those two women," thought Paolo to himself. "Both simple, unaffected, and considerate, the girl so energetic, so gifted, and so beautiful into the bargain. Intercourse with such as they are, could not fail to do me good both as a man and an artist. The mere presence of women has in it a gentle, refining influence nothing else can replace."

Paolo felt so calm, so serenely cheerful, that he could not help laughing inwardly at Mortimer's sombre prognostications. What a thousand pities that such a noble, excellent nature as his friend's should be disfigured by the false notions he entertained about women! Surely, if he were acquainted with this aunt and niece, he would be speedily reconciled to the fair sex. Paolo must manage to make them acquainted with one another.

CHAPTER X.

Miss Lavinia's Diary.

"DEAR LADY AUGUSTA,

"I TOLD you in my last, that before a week was over, my Domenichino would be the most assiduous and devoted of drawing-masters. Well! it will be just a week to-morrow since he first called, and I have already had three lessons. So, you see, I have redeemed my pledge. It is true, that to achieve this victory, I had to make an enormous outlay of amiability, which, after all, did not require much effort; indeed, I believe, it came quite naturally. He is so thankful, so —, what shall I call it? — that it is a pleasure to oneself to please him. I like him very much, aunt doats on him, and he on her. It is surprising how they have taken to one another, and with such scanty means of communication too, for her French is very limited, and so is Signor Paolo's. Uncle is not over-fond of him, of course; Paolo wounded him in some way, as he did Mrs. Piper, who lunched here the same day that he did. He is a sort of *enfant terrible*, who speaks out what he has in his heart, not much used to society, I should imagine. At times as bashful as a girl, at others as bold as Hotspur. He never pays compliments, not even to me. The way he treated my Capuchin friar was too cavalier by half; it was dreadfully discouraging, I told him so yesterday. We have become great friends now, so I do not mind telling him what I think. He laughed, and said, 'I was harsh, was I? It was all for your good, and because I perceived that you had some talent. Nothing spoils promising beginners like praise, nothing

spurs them on so much as a proper degree of severity. I have been told that Rossini, whenever he is applied to for his advice by a hopeless singer, always dismisses him or her with unbounded praise, while he finds plenty of faults with one who is full of promise. The method has its advantages.' Now, isn't that an original way of giving encouragement? Originality is an item, it must be allowed, of which there is no lack in Signor Paolo; whatever he does or says, has a peculiar flavour of its own. And as to being clever, no one in their senses can deny his being wonderfully so. You have no idea what he can produce with only a few strokes. I wish you could see my Capuchin since he touched him up. It was really a lucky star, which guided me to such a delightful man; he amuses, interests, and puzzles me to a degree. If he would come sometimes of an evening, I should not much mind having no parties.

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"He spent last evening with us, and a most pleasant evening it was. Do you think it was an easy favour to obtain? Not at all. Aunt and I had to promise that there should be nobody but ourselves. The gentleman never goes into society; detests formal parties. I told you he was a perfect savage, but a very amiable, agreeable one, worth a dozen of civilized mankind. I made all sorts of discoveries about him. Indeed, the more I see of him, the more he realizes all my fancies about these Italians; those men, you know, of whom we read that they could do everything, artists, poets, warriors, statesmen — Leonardo, Michel Angelo, Salvator Rosa, Benvenuto Cellini, and the like. Well, this Paolo Mancini is as good a poet as a painter, and improvises poetry quite easily. He says that he has a

friend, who never speaks but in verse, and that improvising is quite common among Italians. I gave him some rhymes, and he actually extemporized a sonnet on my portrait. By-the-by, I must give you his. Half a head taller than I am, a powerful-looking, fine figure, a profusion of black curling hair, dark olive complexion, a delicate mouth, and beautiful teeth; hazel eyes with yellow strokes, now soft and sweet, like a wild deer's, now sparkling and terrible, as one fancies a bandit's. You ought to see them when he speaks of the Austrians; they grow black then. He gave us several anecdotes of the last war, and a full description of the defence of Villa Spada on the 30th June, 1849, which made one's flesh creep. The loss of the Romans at that place was dreadful, many of their best officers there met the death of the brave. The emotion of Paolo on speaking of these fine fellows was infectious; so much so, that aunt, who understands Italian but imperfectly, was actually sobbing, and I was scarcely less moved. His pantomime is as eloquent as his speech. Fortunately, uncle was not at home. Signor Paolo's account was so very circumstantial, that it came into my head he must have been at Villa Spada himself, and I asked him. He got as red as fire, and acknowledged the fact. 'And but for my curiosity,' said I, 'you would not have told us?' 'Of what use mentioning it?' he replied.

"There's a piece of modesty for you. I am certain he did wonders. By a skilful cross-examination, I came to the knowledge that he was one of a band of young artists, who, it seems, volunteered to serve under Manara. Some of them were mere boys. Paolo was not eighteen. He talked a great deal of an English-

man, a great friend of his, who made the campaign with them. Paolo spoke with enthusiasm of this Englishman; he says that he is the noblest and most generous fellow on earth, and that he owes all that he is to him. I made him promise to bring this excellent friend to us. I long to know him. I begin to feel an interest in these political subjects I did not think myself capable of. I always hated politics in England. But there is a something romantic here in Italy, a perfume of old chivalrous times, that awakens my sympathy. Signor Paolo is to accompany us to-morrow on a sight-seeing expedition.

"P. S. I have found out a delightful milliner, she is far superior to Alexandrine for bonnets. Adieu!

"P. S. (the last.) I forgot to tell you that Signor Paolo declared that my way of dressing my hair — diadem fashion, you know — is quite artistic, and that he is astonished and charmed at my being called Lavinia. *Apropos* of this name he added something — I did not make it out very well — about Lavinia, the wife of Æneas; and the Romans, the Transteverini especially, boasting of being *sangue Trojano*, the consequence being that I was somewhat of a country-woman of his.

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"I thought I had known a great deal of Rome, but I was mistaken. One must see Rome with a guide like this young man to form any real idea of it. He knows it by heart. Listening to him, old scenes revive as if they were of to-day. I am in a fit of ancient Rome fever. I long to do something like the Clelias, Camillas, or Cornelias. How amazed you would be if, one of these days, I was to turn out a heroine! Sometimes

I fancy — now don't laugh — I have within me the stuff, of which heroines are made. A little more and I shall wear a tunic, and a peplus. The Forum, the Capitol, the Mount Aventine, the Coliseum! what grand names, what grand associations! That awful tragedy of Virginia, I saw enacted over again before my eyes: — the monster Appius on his tribunal; the sweet victim; old Virginius, all dusty with his march from Mount Algidio; Icilius, the affianced lover, boiling over with passion, striving to arouse the crowd; the citizens within the Forum, touched, yet inert; — I saw them all breathe, speak, act, move like creatures of flesh and blood at the bidding of this young magician. I stood in the very place where Virginia fell, transpierced by a father's hand. The butcher's stall, from which Virginius snatched the cruel knife, was at the south-west corner of the Forum, near the three columns which beautify the ruins. From thence we went to the place of the Capitol, where Tiberius Gracchus was slain. Signor Paolo is a fervent admirer of the Gracchi, and a thorough hater of the patricians, their destroyers. The Gracchi, according to him, never dreamed of a new division of property; all they advocated was, a less iniquitous partition of the public lands, usurped by the patricians in defiance of the law. The Gracchi were the first to proclaim the existence of other rights than those of the Roman city — to have what Signor Mancini calls the Italian sentiment, as opposed to mere municipal feeling; and this was an unpardonable crime in the eyes of the nobles. 'Italy to the rescue,' was the dying cry of Tiberius Gracchus. His brother Caius died for the same cause on Mount Aventine. Whatever we may think of their motives, no one can help being struck by three

such heroic beings as these brothers, and their mother Cornelia. The Campagna, seen at this season, is splendid; nothing richer than its warm yellow tints. It has all the grandeur of the desert, but relieved of its uniformity by a series of endless undulations. We had to cross it on our way to the meadows of Quintius, where once was the farm of Cincinnatus. This was the spot where the envoys of the Senate found him guiding the plough, and, after he had put on his toga, saluted him as Dictator. The very simplicity of the scene invests it with a grandeur that no pageantry could give. I made this remark to Signor Paolo, and that it struck me as a beautiful subject for a picture: he agreed with me, and said he would at least attempt it. I was so pleased; I feel very proud to think that a new masterpiece of his will be owing to my suggestion. Aunt was too tired to walk, and remained in the carriage while we examined the place. He is just the proper height for me — half a head taller than I am — and his step suits mine exactly. I am not reduced either to run by his side, or to stalk like a grenadier. Then his arm is so different to lean upon from uncle's thick one. These trifles are no trifles in a long walk. I never walked so far before without being tired.

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“I forgot to tell you of our stumbling on such a beautiful group of pifferari as we were driving through Campo Vaccino. There were three of them — an old man, a young one and a boy — all with the finest heads and most picturesque rags conceivable. The boy, especially, was a treasure-trove, such long curly hair and sparkling black eyes; he looked like an untamed colt. I observed what charming models they would

make, and Signor Paolo immediately alighted, and, after speaking to them, brought me word that they would call the next day, and sit for me, at a certain price per hour. Now these are the sort of considerate attentions that please me; he really does seek to make time pass usefully. - Another little adventure — but not of quite so agreeable a character. I must premise, that when we went out this afternoon, there was a carriage and four standing at a door a few yards from ours. The horses were four splendid animals, sixteen hands high at least, English thoroughbreds. You know that I pique myself on being a good judge of horses, and I warmly expressed my admiration of these beautiful creatures. Their harness, I saw, came from England, and that made me say, I supposed it was an Englishman's equipage. Signor Paolo said, No; it was that of Prince Rocca-Ginestra. 'A fine name, and a finer title,' observed I. 'If I were a man I should like to be a prince, shouldn't you?' It would seem Domenichino did not relish this remark; at least, I guessed as much from a shade of irony conveyed by the tone of his reply: 'Why, I do not know indeed; a title is only a label on a vase; all depends on what is within: at all events, I would not be the Prince of Rocca-Ginestra.' 'Why not?' asked I. 'Because he is —' Signor Paolo hesitated, as if in search of a proper expression, then wound up with 'because he is the last man I would like to resemble.' No more was said on the subject. Well, two or three hours after, as we were driving home through the Corso, what should we meet but this very same carriage and four. The person on the box, who was driving — evidently a gentleman — stared fixedly at us — I ought to say at me — as the

carriages were crossing each other; then, as we drove past, he stood up and never ceased looking at us so long as we remained in sight. I saw a flash of anger in Signor Paolo's eyes as he turned round with some impatience, muttering something to himself—I thought, but I could not be sure, that it was the word 'Sfacciato.' 'What are you looking at?' asked I, in some uneasiness. 'I am showing my admiration of a piece of princely insolence,' retorted he, bitterly. Now, the fact is, that if not absolutely insolent, the prince's persistence in staring at *us*, was, to say the least, highly unbecoming; but, seeing Signor Paolo's exasperation, with a view to soften it, I chose to overlook, or rather pretend not to have perceived, any cause of offence in the prince's behaviour. 'So much the better,' said he, drily; 'you are the best judge, after all, since it was you, not me, that he looked at.' And he remained sullen and silent. He accompanied us to the door of our apartment, but declined aunt's invitation to come in, and left us with a cloud on his brow. How touchy he must be to take up such a mere trifle in that way! Really, the effect was out of proportion to the cause. I fear my Domenichino has by far too violent a temper. I could not help thinking of this silly affair all the evening.

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"I had a new illustration last night of Signor Paolo's impetuosity, though, I must own, I fairly brought it upon myself by my rashness. Uncle was dining at the Pipers', and we went to see the Coliseum by moonlight. I waive all description, as the solemn grandeur of the scene admits of none; or, if you must have one, I refer you to the best I know of—Byron's canto fourth of *Childe Harold*. We went round the arcades

of the great oval, previous to climbing to the upper part. Signor Paolo was evoking the past with his usual eloquence, and filling the gloomy solitude with the din and strife of life; — men reared to die handsomely, gracefully, in cadence, in fact, making an art of death; vestals looking on with the gaze of connoisseurs, and *not* lifting up their thumbs for those who had fallen ungracefully; the sword plunging; thousands applauding. Horrible! The way he pictured all this told so powerfully on my nerves, that a sudden noise, and rush past us, threw me off my guard. I started up, and was so foolish as to utter a cry. As you may well imagine, it was but a dog or cat whose slumbers we had troubled. Aunt came up with Cæsar in some alarm, and I laughed at my fright, but I was not the less ashamed of having made myself such a goose, especially in the presence of a gentleman. Aunt did not feel inclined to climb up to the upper part of the building, and said she would wait for us below; so we went, Signor Paolo and I, in search of an opening. I was the first to see one, and made for it. ‘Not that way,’ cried out Signor Paolo; ‘it is unsafe; there is written on that pole, you see, a warning to visitors, of its being dangerous.’ I was glad of the opportunity of showing my companion that I was not one of the women suited to a milk-sop, and answered, laughing, ‘When our Serpentine is frozen over, there are plenty of poles with warnings where the ice is weak, but the notice has no other effect than that of attracting crowds of skaters to those very spots. English men, and women too, court danger, you know;’ and then up I went as fast as I could. He rushed after me as quick as lightning, and caught me so roughly by the arm that he

hurt me. 'You are hurting me,' I exclaimed. 'Come down then at once, or I shall lift you down,' was the laconic answer. The iron grasp left me no alternative, and so down I came, but highly provoked. 'You might have been a little less violent, sir,' I said. 'Trample me under your feet, if you like; but, for God's sake, do not give me such another fright,' and he gasped for breath. I looked up at him; he was the colour of ashes, and shaking from head to foot. I was disarmed. 'Indeed, I will not,' said I; 'I did not mean to pain you.' 'Pain me?' he echoed. 'If anything were to happen to you, only think!' then he stopped. There was not much in the words; but the look and the accent — really, I dare not fathom the depth of what they implied. I pleaded fatigue, and put off the ascent to another time, and hastened to rejoin my aunt. I am full of misgivings; that look and that accent — oh, dear! Do what I will to get rid of them, I cannot; they haunt me.

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"It was all a fancy; a trick played on my nerves by that awful Coliseum. Signor Paolo has called here each of the three last days, and stayed for hours, and nothing disagreeable has happened. I don't believe there was a shadow of a foundation for my stupid alarm. How foolish and how unjust I have been! That's the worst of being a beauty, one is always too much on the alert. Paolo is as natural, as much at his ease, as *enfant terrible* as ever, so far as my painting is concerned. Certainly, he does not spoil me about that; delicate shades of expression are not his forte. What he considers bad, he calls bad as a matter of course. However, he has been of the greatest use to me with

these pifferari; but for him I never could have managed them, especially that wild, lovely urchin, restless as quicksilver. As it is, I have succeeded in chalking out my group; a *tolerably* good one, he says. I would not be helped. If he has a will of his own, so have I. Yesterday he brought his English friend with him, Mr. Mortimer Thornton, a very gentlemanly person, but cold and dry like a black frost. He reminds one of the statue of the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*. I don't like him; uncle does. After Mr. Thornton's departure, he came to my atelier — uncle, — I mean, and was very civil to Domenichino. From this, I conjecture that Mr. Thornton had been speaking in the young painter's praise. Uncle said to Signor Paolo that he must paint my portrait. Signor Paolo coloured as usual, and expressed his willingness, but said the light was not good enough here, and that he should have to beg me to go to his atelier. Uncle asked if I should have any objection. Of course, I had none; so it is settled that on the day after to-morrow I am to sit for my portrait. Signor Paolo is confident of its turning out a great success; he said as much when uncle had left the room. I feel quite elated, and a little nervous also at the prospect. I delay sending this to tell you of my first sitting.

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“It proved a solemn *fiasco*; in fact, I did not sit at all, owing to ———, what do you think? — to a whim, my dear, of my Signor Domenichino. I had no sooner taken off my cloak, than he grew scarlet, and I saw by his face that something was amiss. He cannot dissemble. His countenance is a mirror in which all that passes within him is reflected. He regretted, he said,

that we had not agreed beforehand on the sort of costume I was to be painted in. The style of dress I had chosen was too showy for a portrait, at least, for such a one as he had imagined. I shall leave you to judge whether he was right or not. I had on an evening dress of white satin, trimmed all round with quillings of *tulle de soie*, headed with tiny roses. Then he found fault with my *coiffure*, it was too elaborate. Nonsense! A *cachepeigne* of small roses, half hidden under a bow of *tulle*, with long *barbes* falling over my shoulders; do you call that elaborate? Could there be anything more simple? He was not done yet with his grievances; the skirt of the dress was denounced as too ample, creating a want of harmony, a dissonance in the *ensemble*, — his very words. You may well imagine, dear Augusta, that I did not look particularly well pleased with all this criticism. ‘Statuary, that is, nature,’ he continued, ‘is the unerring test of the beauty of human form; and whatever goes against this test, is ungraceful. Be you yourself the judge,’ said he, gallantly; and he immediately made a little sketch, and handing it to me, added, ‘That is, I assure you, the precise outline of your figure, and I am sure you have too much good taste to wish to be so portrayed.’ So far, I must confess, that if the drawing he made was not a caricature, my appearance was anything but artistic. I had a frightful resemblance to one of the figures in the *Courier des Dames*. I do not, however, mean to say, that I had in the least trespassed the limits set by fashion; but what looks well enough in the drawing-room, may be objectionable in a picture. I felt rather abashed, and must have looked so, as he continued with more

gentleness, 'Perhaps my notions about simplicity may seem *exaggerated*, but you will kindly make a sacrifice to my idiosyncrasy.' I answered that I would willingly conform to his wishes, but that I owed it to myself to say, that I did not consider that there was any *exaggeration* in my dress, that is, taking into account what was the fashion; and that ninety-nine women out of a hundred would wear, when in full dress, a much wider skirt than the one I had on. 'I believe so,' said Signor Paolo; 'but that is not a reason, it is only a proof that bad taste is prevalent. Majorities are not blindly to be trusted.' The sentiment, and, still more, the cutting tone in which it was uttered, irritated me, and I asked, rather sharply, 'Are minorities, then?' 'Perhaps,' said he, gravely, 'if you question history, it will answer you that all great men and women were in the minority.' 'As I am not a great woman, nor have any ambition of becoming one,' said I, 'allow me to side with the greater number.' 'As you please,' was the dry answer. We parted coldly. Signor Paolo is to paint me as he first saw me, in my riding habit, and no *coiffure*, but my hair dressed as I usually wear it, in braids, and a wide plait diadem-like. Aunt says she never saw him so ill at ease, so constrained in his manner; that he must have had something on his mind. Certainly, he was unlike himself, and did not appear to advantage. Painters and poets are proverbial for their whims, you know, and he is both one and the other. Adieu, with my love.

* * * * *

"Just another line to tell you that I have had a splendid sitting of two hours and a half, including re-

spites, chatting, laughing, singing, and what not. How droll he can be when he chooses! I thought that if there was a fault in him, it was gravity, but he is not grave at all. To see him mimic the *fantoccini au naturel*, to hear him repeat the witty puns of Pasquin and Marforio, and lisp like Tartaglia, is a treat worth any comedy. Aunt was black in the face, and I laughed till I cried, though, heaven knows, I had put on a mask sullen enough when I first sat down. He had perceived it, as he confessed afterwards, and was determined to put me in a right frame of mind to be painted; and he succeeded, for it is impossible to be angry with this extraordinary wild Roman. My picture is coming on beautifully; I think he was right, after all; there will be much more character in it than if I had been dressed in my white satin. One of his ideas is, that there must be a constant talk kept up between him and his sitter; it is the only means, he avers, to catch the easy, natural expression of a countenance; and most portraits look constrained and stiff from the want of this desideratum. Mine, certainly, will not sin in this particular; — how we rattled on about art, nature, literature, music; how wonderfully our tastes agree!

“LAVINIA.”

CHAPTER XI.

Horoscope and Pyrrhic Dance.

PAOLO, on his side, was so much satisfied with the result of the conversation just alluded to in Miss Lavinia's diary, he had had such a dip as he conceived it, into Lavinia's innermost soul, and found it in such perfect unison with his own, that he felt quite proof against all Thornton's ominous prognostications; and half a smile played on his lips at the elongated face and the gravity of his English friend, when he came, a few days afterwards, to report on what he was pleased to call his reconnoitrings.

When first apprised by Paolo of the wish expressed by Mrs. Jones and her niece to make his acquaintance, and of a half-promise to that effect given by the young painter, Thornton had winced considerably, protesting that he had not settled at Rome for the purpose of meeting his own country people. On second thoughts, however, he had changed his mind, called of his own accord at Palazzo Morlacchi, and freely discussed Mr. and Mrs. Jones with Paolo afterwards. But as to Lavinia, short of expressing a general wish that she might resemble her aunt, he had declined giving his impression, until he should have seen more of her, and made assurance doubly sure. This he had now done, and the horoscope he drew of Miss Jones was gloomy enough. A bewitching creature, he owned, but shallow, and worldly; belonging, he regretted to say, to one of the worst varieties of the species Fine Lady — "the aspiring."

"That is classifying with a vengeance," said Paolo, quietly; "now for a little definition, if you please."

"It is a structure so complicated, so full of hooks and crooks, the product of a state of things, of a course of circumstances so peculiar, and so far away even from your most distant conception, that it is as difficult for me to define as for you to realize it. An aspiring fine lady is a bad copy, with all the defects and none of the good points of a but indifferent original — a being conventional from top to toe, one who feeds on shams, hunts shadows, and is impervious to realities."

"The picture is rich in colour and flowing in circumstance," replied the Roman; "but I humbly confess to a want of penetration in perceiving in what it applies to the young lady in question, unless the widest sympathies with all that is simple, good, and beautiful, be but conventionalism — unless an exalted sense of nature, poetry, and art lay one open to the charge of feeding on shams, and hunting after shadows."

"Ah! you are already under the spell," sighed Thornton.

"If you have decided that it is so, then let it be so — what is the use of further argument?" said Paolo, in a tone of resignation.

"A childish whim about painting, which will last just so long as it has the attraction of novelty, and the little romance in which it originated, you exalt into a passion for art — a few fine phrases on poetry and nature, you receive as an irrefragable test of feeling and simplicity of taste — fashionable dilettantism you construe into a right earnest vocation. It is mistaking a lamp for the sun, my dear friend; therein lies your

deception. Those are poor votaries of the true, the simple, the beautiful, I can tell you, whose whole heart is set upon the world and its baubles. Would you elicit genuine sparks of fire from her eyes and soul? Discuss with her the fashionable news, as I did; the marriages in high life, the *déjeûner dansant* at the marchioness's, the duchess's carpet dance."

"It is out at last," exclaimed Paolo, vehemently. "Miss Jones, very likely, lays more stress than either you or I do, on accidents of birth and station — she has been brought up in that creed; and upon what is, after all, a harmless bent of her mind, you rest her indictment and condemnation."

"Your harmless bent of the mind, I beg you to believe, may be fraught with practical inconveniences of a very serious character. Rank fever is a most dangerous distemper. Marry a duchess or a factory girl, above or beneath the infection, that's my advice."

"Mortimer," said the painter, half teased, half disposed to laugh, "I'll marry nobody; I am in love with nobody — there!"

"Give me a proof that you are not," continued Mortimer. "Come with me to Paris."

"To Paris?" exclaimed Paolo, reddening. "Show me good reason for doing so, and I will go. Have you any pressing business there, which cannot brook delay?" and Paolo looked full into his friend's eyes.

"You know I have not. Suppose it is one of my whims. Very well: accept and humour it."

"I would at once, but that it interferes with the commonest decorums of life, and with — my self-respect."

"How do you mean?" asked Mortimer.

"I mean that I have pledged myself to assist and direct this young lady in her study of painting; and that, short of behaving like a boor, I cannot, without a strong motive, withdraw from my engagement — I mean, that I have accepted a commission pressed upon me by Mr. Jones himself, to paint his niece's portrait."

"A rare piece of madness that," interrupted Mortimer; "but leave it all to me, I'll take whatever odium may accrue upon myself."

"But you cannot take upon yourself the ridicule I should incur in my own eyes. There is something degrading in the notion of running away like a child or a fool; running away from what, I should like to know?"

"He asks from what!" burst out Mortimer, with an appealing look to the ceiling. "From what? why from certain mischief. There is no ridicule in a man's seeking safety in flight from agencies beyond his individual control."

"Such as floods, earthquakes, and Miss Lavinias," said Paolo, jestingly.

"You could as soon withstand a flood or an earthquake as the fascination of that young lady: it is fated, I tell you, that if you go on seeing her, you will go crazy about her in no time. Now put this fact in juxtaposition with this other one, that your nature and Miss Lavinia's are antagonistic in every respect; you need not shake your head, they are exactly the two poles; and you will see what will come of it."

"I will tell you what will come of it," replied Paolo, "if you kindly abate a little of that extreme fascination and of that extreme antagonism, a pleasant intercourse and a disinterested friendship."

"Was there ever such a delusion as this?" exclaimed Mortimer. "Friendship! she is of the clay whereof men make idols, not friends. A perfect siren from top to toe; see her at her harp, and try not to fall at her feet; hear her sing, and do not worship her! There is a seductive charm in inhaling the same air she breathes."

"Eh! eh!" laughed Paolo; "how your subject warms you! I begin to suspect you feel the spell yourself."

"Fiddlestick!" ejaculated Mortimer, rising.

"And that you want to get me out of your way," continued the young man.

Vexed as he was, Thornton could not help smiling at this preposterous charge, and at the roguish solemnity with which it was made. As smiles, however, tallied ill with his present Mentorlike mood, he went to the window as if to look out at the weather, and said gravely:

"The subject is too serious a one to admit of jesting; reconsider my proposal, and be wise for this once. Adieu."

Paolo did not reconsider a proposal, which seemed to him too absurd to deserve even a moment's discussion, and brought instead all his powers of self-investigation to bear upon the question of whether he really was guilty of being in love, or even in a fair way of becoming so. Thornton's persistence on this point had ended by creating some little alarm in the young man's mind. A man in love, reasoned Paolo, or one nearly so, must feel differently from a man who is not so. Now, go through what self-examination he would, he perceived no sensible change in himself from

what he was seventeen days back, when this Miss Lavinia was for him a nonentity. He was haunted by none of the phenomena which attend the sweet torment of love, of which he had read in the poets; he had no restlessness, no desire of solitude, no sickening alternations of hope and despair, of elation and depression, no irresistible craving, to consign any name to the echoes of mountains and valleys; of all such notorious accompaniments of the tender passion he was as yet innocent. He felt as self-composed and companionable as usual, was not the least disposed to sigh or to shed tears; nor was he aware of any the slightest alteration in his perception of things. That he greatly admired Miss Lavinia he freely admitted; but Mortimer admired her also, and Mortimer laughed at the idea of being in love with her. That he had great pleasure in her company was true, but not beyond what was reasonable, not more, probably, than he should have in the company of any other lovely and accomplished person. Just now, for instance, he had not seen her for two whole days, and yet time had not hung heavy on his hands: no doubt, he would be glad to see her again; nevertheless, he was not ready to tear his hair out of impatience. He had done for her, he owned, what he would not have done for anyone else, undertaken her portrait, and undertaken it with enthusiasm; but then he had never before met with so beautiful a model, and he was not an artist for nothing. Admiration and sympathy were not love.

Thus far the account was smooth; still there remained an obscure item to clear up, a something that did not fit quite exactly into the mould of sympathy and admiration he had so nicely arranged — we mean

the sudden panic he had taken about Miss Jones at the Coliseum, and the irresistible impulse under which he had acted at the time. Surely, what he had felt just at that instant, was most strange, mysterious, and quite new to him. More than once had he seen some of his best friends in jeopardy, and felt for them acutely; yet never had his whole being been shaken from its foundations, never had such a fit of frenzy seized upon him, as on that evening at the Coliseum. Still, there was a perfectly natural way of explaining even this, in the vagueness of the danger itself, and the circumstance of the person in peril being a woman. Might it not also have been the sense of his own responsibility, the aunt having confided her niece to his care, which, suddenly striking him, had entirely upset him? Imagine, in fact, the horror of his situation, if any mischief had occurred, and he had had to go and announce a catastrophe to Mrs. Jones, what would Mr. Jones.

Here a whiff of the war-song in *Norma*, *Guerra*, *guerra*, &c. given forth close at hand, at the highest pitch of a well-known tenor's voice, broke the trains of Paolo's speculations, and made him clap his hands, and say aloud: "Here is the very man I want; if Salvator Rosa, who has been in love these four years, does not know everything about love, nobody does;" and he went immediately to open the door, a happy thought, as it proved, for the new-comer was so encumbered, that he could never have opened it for himself.

Salvator had a guitar slung round his neck, some wearing apparel on his shoulders, a big bundle on each arm, a round hat on the top of his velvet cap, a couple of palettes in his left hand, a quantity of brushes and pencils in his right, and a huge German pipe in his

mouth. In this old clothesman's accoutrement, he sprang into the middle of the room, and threw himself into a warlike attitude, waving his brushes over his head.

"In the name of reason, what is the matter with you?" asked Paolo. For all answer to this question Salvator shouted forth anew, *Guerra, guerra, morte, sterminio*, &c., leaped forwards, then backwards, parried a blow from the left, dealt a tremendous thrust to the right, and finally fell into a war-dance with a vigour that sent most of his encumbrances flying about the room, yet with a gravity which Paolo's roars of laughter did not in the least disturb. Nor did a single muscle in his face relax, until he dropped into a chair, wiped the sweat off his brow, and said with a hearty laugh, "I hope you approve of my Pyrrhic dance."

"It has singularly cannibal looking features to be the classic offspring of antique Hellas."

"I have introduced a few variations," panted forth Salvator, "with a view to adapt it to modern times and tastes. It is symbolical of art, outraged in my person, consigning to the avenging deities Barbarism personified by landlords."

"You talk in riddles," said Paolo.

"To explain," resumed Salvator, "you see in me a victim, *un innocente vittima*, he sang forth; a victim of a landlord's — what shall I call it? I wish to be parliamentary — of a landlord's indelicacy. You see in me the pearl of tenants, as far as good-will goes, turned out like a dog from his stately suite of — a single room, under the most aggravating circumstances. *Al sol pensarvi, o cielo, insieme avvampo e gelo*. But what could I expect of an Ostrogoth, who wears a pigtail, and is tetragonal enough to the fascination of the fine

arts, to prefer a paltry sum of four scudi, three paoli, and two bajocchi, to the honour of having his features transmitted to remotest ages by the pencil of Salvator Rosa the Second."

"Mighty short-sighted of him," observed Paolo; "yet as the landlord bargained for money, it is but fair that he should have the choice."

"So far granted," said Salvator; "whatever may be my particular reasons for preferring to pay in kind to paying in cash, I fully admit his claim to the latter mode. It is to the Goth-like manner of enforcing this claim, that I object. Now, I make you the judge between us." The little man rose, went up the room with the approved stage stride, seemed to listen, looked to the right and left, as tenors are apt to do, who are about to put the public in the confidence of some mighty secret, then stepped forwards again, took Paolo, by the wrist, and gave forth close to his ear a most tremendous "*Ascolta!*"

"This morning about nine, I went as usual to fetch wherewithal to restore my exhausted frame, a penny roll, and a dozen or so of roasted chesnuts; — allow me to add a cheap, savoury, nutritious breakfast, and one I highly recommend. My purchase had not consumed many minutes. Well, back in the innocence of my soul, *senz' alcun sospetto*, — back I climb to my garret, when lo! — *qual si mostrò spettacolo* — *all' atterrito sguardo* — everything I possess, scattered about the landing-place, my guitar, my palettes, my precious manuscripts rolling in the dust. I put my key in the lock in vain, the lock had been changed. Was this a shabby trick, or was it not, I ask you?"

"Most shabby indeed," emphasized Paolo.

"What could I do, but gather my baggage together, and go? But the difficulty was whither to go. Presently, I remembered you, and your double wigwam, and sang to myself, — *Io so chi la s'onora pura ospitalità*, and here I am, to beg a few nights' lodging, till I can decide whether to hire a villa in the suburbs, or a palace in Piazza di Spagna."

"You are welcome to my former kennel, such as it is," said Paolo, pointing to a recess concealed by a screen; "but I warn you it is not very desirable; think once again if you had not better make it up with your landlord."

"Never!" interrupted Salvator; "such an act would be nothing else than an encouragement to all unfeelingness and shabbinnss, it would be inconsistent with my principles. Pay him I shall and will as soon as I have the paltry coin; but let him tremble in the meantime for it — that shall be his pnnishment. As to you, most noble friend, your sheltering walls shall have as little of my company as possible — just from ten in the evening to seven in the morning."

"Very good," said Paolo; "but I do not see, why being my guest at night should deprive me of your visits during the day. Make yourself at home; only mark, that canvas which is there, turned with its face against the wall, is tabooed, and so is smoking for a little while."

"A word to the wise," replied Salvator; "discretion is my motto."

"And now that these preliminaries are settled," said Paolo, "tell me how is Clelia. I have not seen her this age."

"As far as health and spirits go, Clelia is quite well thank you."

"Has she any work to do?" asked Paolo.

"Just enough to keep body and soul together," was the answer, "the demand for cameos is far from brisk just now."

"No near prospect of bringing your long engagement to a happy close?" inquired Paolo.

"No more than we had when we pledged our faith to one another — four years ago next Christmas. Poverty still puts in her veto, but still we are happy. We live on in hope and love."

"By-the-by," went on Paolo, with a shade of embarrassment in his manner, "I wish you would give me a description of your sensations at the time you were falling in love."

"Halloa! Telemachus, my fine fellow," shouted the little painter, with an eager glance at his friend, "are you going to enter the great brotherhood, eh? The sooner the better, I can tell you."

"No such thing, I assure you — not I indeed," replied Paolo, with a slight blush; "when that happens, I will tell you faithfully."

"Well then, let me think how it was I felt, when I was falling in love," said Salvator, with a reflective air; "upon my word, as far as I remember, nothing particular. It didn't come bit by bit, that I am aware of — I believe it came all at once. The instant I felt something, it was done and over."

"But while it was going on — let it have been for ever so short a time, it is contrary to nature that you should not have had any forewarning, that it was an

incipient passion. Were you much struck by her beauty at first?"

"Not much, not more than I should be by any pretty face I met in the street. It is true that I was ill at the time: I first saw her in the hospital. You know I was laid up for two months there, by a bad fever caught by sleeping on the wet ground out of Porta San Pancrazio: a long time it seems now since that 1849. She was one of the voluntary nurses who attended the sick in that hospital, and she used to come and pet and cheer and comfort me, which made me feel very grateful and very happy."

"Had you no occasional fit of restlessness, despondency, sleeplessness, no loathing of your food?"

"As long as the fever was on me I had; but as soon as I got rid of it, I slept very well, ate with relish, and was altogether very comfortable."

"Did you fret when she was after her usual time?"

"She never was late, so I had no occasion to fret, nor had I strength to do so either; a babe three weeks old could not be more weak and helpless than I was."

"Very strange," said Paolo, pondering, "and never —"

"Stop a bit," interrupted Salvator, "here is a symptom for you. A fortnight previous to my leaving, a young officer was brought in, badly wounded — a Tuscan — poor soul! he died shortly afterwards. I must first tell you he was uncommonly handsome, rich curly hair, deep-set brown eyes, a perfect Rafaelesque head. I have a sketch of him somewhere that I will show you when I can find it. Very well, his bed was opposite

to mine, and whenever Clelia was by his bedside, I felt most uncharitably towards that noble young man."

"It was jealousy," pronounced Paolo.

"I suppose it was; but it did not enlighten me a bit as to the state of my heart."

"And when was it," asked Paolo, "that you discovered its real condition?"

"On the very day I left the hospital. I had such a pang in parting from her, it was like parting from my very soul. I reeled about like one who had lost his centre of gravity; I was positively miserable. I felt no interest in any earthly thing, no, not even in the Libretto. Then it was, that I did begin to feel restless, that a frantic yearning after her seized on me. At the end of the second day, I could stand it no longer. I went back to the hospital, saw her for half a minute, and said to her, 'Will you be the wife of a little monkey, who has nothing to offer but his great love for you?' She blushed, and laughed outright, and said she must have a fortnight to think about it. The answer came at last, and on that very day we were affianced, and since have lived on hope and love, and indeed very little else;" and the narrator wound up with, "*Della terra in cui viviamo — Ci facciamo un ciel d'amor.*"

Little wiser by this confession, nay, rather more puzzled than he was before he received it, Paolo wended his way towards Palazzo Morlacchi, with an unusually thoughtful countenance.

CHAPTER XII.

Paolo feels Uncharitable.

PASSING through the reserved passage to Miss Jones's studio, Paolo found nobody there but Lavinia's maid. She was waiting for him with a message from the ladies, to say that they had visitors in the drawing-room, and particularly requested him to join them there. Paolo would fain have made his escape, but as usual his shyness came in his way, and even while still debating with himself how he could decently beat a retreat, the doors of the drawing-room had closed upon him, and he was undergoing an introduction to Count Mendez Fortiguerra and Cavaliere Martucci.

This Cavaliere Martucci, the reader may recollect, had met the Jones's at Florence, had promised to find them out at Rome, and to make them acquainted with a friend of his, a Roman noble. Both of them handsome men in their own styles, the appearance of count and chevalier offered a most striking contrast.

The count was nothing by half; very dark, very tall, powerfully built, and with a loud deep bass voice; his features, though good and regular, were too strongly marked to be agreeable, his big aquiline nose in particular, and his well-cut, but salient lips, the *beau idéal* of animalism. A blue tint about his mouth and on his closely-shaven chin, bore witness to a beard as thick and deep-set as a hog's bristles. His manner and address were those of a man of the world, easy and dignified; rather too dignified, for now and then they forced on one the recollection of the *padre nobile* of the stage. When at rest, which was but seldom the

case, the count had a way of burying his chin in an uncommonly high and stiff cravat, which attitude, combined with a forehead naturally broad and lofty, and rendered still more so by the complete absence of hair, gave him an air of depth and wisdom that might have suited the most profound diplomatist. Although he had reached full threescore years, he looked scarcely fifty. He was in deep mourning.

Not quite five feet high, but remarkably well-shaped and well-proportioned, Cavaliere Martucci was the prettiest little blondin that one ever set eyes upon. Despite the soft golden down on his upper lip, elaborately twisted *en croc*, he might at first sight have been mistaken for a woman in disguise, so unquestionably feminine were the small plump hand, the diminutive foot, cherry lip, rosy cheek, pink ear, the skilfully-parted golden hair, and the silvery thread of voice; the little gold circlets he wore as earrings, tended still more to increase the illusion. His dress in excellent taste, was as trim and precise as if he had been brought hither in a bandbox, and turned out of it in the ante-chamber. His turned-down shirt-collar fell over a fancy satin necktie, his wristbands fastened by coral buttons, closed round his wrists, as symmetrically as if they had been painted; nor were any of the innumerable, almost imperceptible plaits of his shirt-front in the least ruffled. A very microscopic star attached to a very microscopic chain, hung from one of the button-holes of his coat.

The conversation, or rather conversations — for Count Fortiguerra's was in English, and particularly addressed to Mrs. Jones, while Cavaliere Martucci's, being Italian, was for Miss Lavinia's especial benefit

— the conversations, we say, for a moment interrupted by Paolo's entrance and introduction to the strangers, were speedily resumed. The count went on descending on the virtues, attainments, and *sans façon* of his Majesty Lewis, late king of Bavaria, then a resident in Rome, and, as it would seem, one of the count's particular friends. The chevalier, on his side, was describing with rapture to Miss Jones a new song by Patito, the famous composer of ballads, and eagerly expressing his astonishment, that a young lady possessed of such musical talent as Miss Lavinia, should be so far behind the rest of the fashionable world as not to have heard of *La Lagrima di un Angelo*. Why, it was quite the rage among amateurs.

Paolo who knew nothing of H. M. Lewis, nor yet of the romance in vogue, took no share in either of the dialogues, beyond a brief answer to any of the direct questions, occasionally put to him by Miss Lavinia, with the evident intention of making him a party to what was going on. Besides that he was naturally but little communicative in the presence of strangers, these two, and more especially the lesser of the two, raised his bile — and why so? It is self-evident that they both stood in his way; but it was the small chevalier that engrossed Miss Lavinia, and thus more directly interfered with Paolo's own time — a time, he began to think, which might be better employed than in listening to nonsense. Because after all, he was not there for his own pleasure, he was there to criticize Miss Jones's drawing, to give her advice, — in short, call it by what name he would, the fact was patent to himself; he was there to give her a lesson. Nor was it just to lay all the blame on the visitors, Miss Lavi-

nia herself was in fault. What, in the name of wonder, could keep her rooted there? Had she never deserted company in the drawing-room to attend to her painting? She showed, he was sorry to feel, but little consideration in detaining him thus.

Making these ungracious reflections, our young savage mechanically took up a pamphlet lying on the table within his reach. It proved to be a number of an illustrated English serial — Paolo turned over the pages, examining the engravings; Miss Lavinia presently, perhaps to make him feel the impropriety of thus isolating himself, pointedly addressed him, saying,—

“You seem mightily interested in your book, Signor Paolo.”

“Rather diverted than interested,” was Paolo’s reply; “such a droll picture as I have chanced on,” and he handed the open book to the young lady. The illustration represented a number of young ladies kneeling before a huge coronet. First, as Lavinia cast her eyes on it, she blushed, and then burst into a merry peal of laughter, that sent a thrill of delight through Paolo’s whole being. He said with a smile, —

“I see, at all events, you do not belong to that pious sisterhood.”

“I should like to know who does,” returned Lavinia; “I beg you will not imagine that my countrywomen are so silly as that. It is a caricature, the splenetic production of a misanthrope, that’s all.”

“O Thornton, Thornton, why are you not here?” thought the young man; and addressing Lavinia, “Of course, I look at it as an exaggeration; I do not suppose any rational being worships such baubles,” and

his eyes, perhaps intentionally, rested upon the chevalier's little star.

Did the chevalier notice that glance, or did he not? Would he resent it, or receive it in a Christian spirit? These questions must remain unanswered, for just then in bustled Mr. Jones, and the *salamalecs* began. The chevalier, as in duty bound, introduced the Roman to the Englishman, the Englishman to the Roman. His noble friend Count Mendez Fortiguerra — his distinguished friend, Mr. Jones. The two great powers, Purse and Pedigree, bowed, then shook hands, declaring their mutual satisfaction at being thus made acquainted. Purse's satisfaction was alloyed by the mortification he felt, at having kept Pedigree waiting. Pedigree, feeling that *noblesse oblige*, protested with a bow to the ladies that time in such delightful company fled too fast to be perceived.

Whoever may have accused Mr. Jones of having something morose and forbidding about him, bore false witness. Just look at him now, and say if man ever possessed a smother brow, a sweeter smile, a greater amenity of manner. Mark the softness of his voice as he expresses the hope that the count is fairly settled for the winter in Rome, and that he will often honour him and Mrs. Jones with his company.

A cloud of sadness overshadows the count's lofty forehead, as he murmurs a regret about a late painful loss — a family affliction (with a plaintive look at his mourning costume) which at present debars him from either going to or receiving company at his own house.

Mr. Jones's jaws droop with potent sympathy, and the sunshine of eye and mouth subsides into a placid melancholy.

"Such is life," observes he, with a sigh; perhaps

by a natural filiation of ideas, the mention of sorrow suggests to the Englishman's mind the expediency of a dose of comfort, and count and cavaliere are invited to pass into an adjoining room, where they will find some refreshment.

Count Fortiguerra, who is perhaps a teetotaller, will with pleasure accept a little sugar and water, and the trio make their exit with all due ceremony.

Paolo, who for the last ten minutes, has been opening his eyes wider and wider, who has been asking himself, whether or not he was witnessing the performance of a comedy, now draws a long breath of relief. So, to say the truth, does Mrs. Jones — so does Miss Lavinia. But the burden of the day is not yet over. Mr. and Mrs. Piper are announced, and in steps Mrs. Piper in a state of great excitement. Miss Jones now tries to make her escape by pleading an engagement, but the lady will not listen to any such excuse; she wants Miss Jones; she declares she has designs on Miss Jones, she must have Miss Jones all to herself. Perhaps Mrs. Piper insists the more, because she notices Paolo's look of vexation. There is nothing for it but to yield. Paolo rises and takes his leave — Lavinia, making many apologies, accompanies him to the door of the room, and lets fall in his ear a gracious promise, to sit for her portrait on the morrow at twelve o'clock. With this bit of comfort to feed on, Paolo departs.

He knew not where to go, he knew not what to do with himself. For the first time in his life, his studio had no attractions for him, nor had he any inclination for Thornton's company, hitherto his harbour of refuge in troubled weather. There was only one person for whose conversation he just then felt any desire, and

that was his houseless friend, Salvator; but how to track him? it was like looking for a bird in a wood.

He walked straight on in the direction of the Pincio, musing the while, "Where the deuce could that theatrical-looking count, and that ridiculous manikin of a cavaliere come from? Why ridiculous? because he was so small and feminine-looking? Was not Salvator but little if any taller, and with an appearance equally feminine? yet had he not inspired a beautiful and sensible girl with a devoted love? True it was, that Salvator had sterling qualities, and a heart of gold. For anything that Paolo knew to the contrary, the chevalier might be as well gifted. Miss Jones certainly seemed anything but displeased with the proprietor of the little star. Women do not see with men's eyes. Well, whether a hero or a pickpocket, what business was it of Paolo's? — his business, since he had been stupid enough to let himself be so entangled, was to direct the young lady's artistic studies, and not to take upon himself the duties of a commissary of police, *apropos* of any man, preposterous or not, who might make her acquaintance."

And forthwith he dismissed this subject from his meditations, and began to think of something else; but just as any road will lead to Rome, according to the proverb, so did thought upon any object, however distant, infallibly bring him back to the point from which he had started.

One thing he could not forgive Miss Lavinia, and that was the sort of mystery she had made about this man. It was clear that she had known him for some time, and yet she had never mentioned even his name to Paolo, never so much as alluded to any such ac-

quaintance. It would have been so natural, knowing so very few Italians as she did, that she should have spoken of this one, said that she expected his arrival. She had judged otherwise; perhaps she had her own reasons for making a secret of it. Once more, whether she had or not, what was it to him? The best thing he could do was to enjoy his walk: a beautiful place this Pincio, and such a lovely day!

But the wisest resolutions were not able to struggle against the new bent of his mind, and in another moment he had relapsed into his former mood of conjectures. "What could be the link between Mr. Jones and these two Italians? for, that theirs was not a mere visit of compliment, but had a specific purpose which concerned Mr. Jones, was self-evident; otherwise, how account for their waiting for him in so determined a manner, quite beyond the limits of any usual visit? The very eagerness with which Mr. Jones had manœuvred to take them away to another room, left no doubt in Paolo's mind that the move was to secure a private conversation. It was as clear as that blue sky over him, that the three gentlemen had some interest in common, which required privacy, and that he had been in their way. In the name of wonder, what grand state affair could it be?"

At this point a sudden light illumined the mind of our young dreamer, and caused him to quicken his steps, like one who all at once discovers himself to be treading on mined ground. The mystery was solved, the manikin was a lover, the Padre Nobile, an uncle come to back his nephew's suit, the subject to be discussed, a proposal of marriage, of course, no sooner made than accepted. The riddle would have been no

riddle to any one with a grain of common sense, and here he had been for hours tasking his brain to find out, what a child commonly gifted would have guessed at the first glance. Fool that he was! ha! ha!

And the poor big boy went on walking until dusk, and with only a short halt at Lepri's for a morsel, even till long after dusk, nicely smoothing and arranging, and turning into mathematical evidence, the wildest dreams of his fancy, on the whole not without a kind of savage pleasure; and lashing himself into a most intolerant mood towards counts and chevaliers — then asking, with a dawn of incipient consciousness of playing the hypocrite with himself, what business was it of his, whether Miss Jones married or not? What would he not have given to have overheard the dialogue, which was being carried on during his feat of pedestrianism, and to listen to which, the process not being over delicate, it is our painful duty to request the reader.

In a back parlour of a low tavern in Transtevere, Count Fortiguerra and his diminutive Achates were discussing, not precisely some nice point of heraldry, left perhaps obscure by D'Hosier and Co., but a huge flask of Montepulciano; the count with lustrous eyes and flushed cheeks, no longer in state costume and stiff cravat, but quite in a *sans façon* attire and mood in keeping with the place and his present convivial occupation. The chevalier was still smartly dressed, but his late display of fine linen and golden star eclipsed for the nonce by the intervening folds of a loose overcoat buttoned up to the chin.

"I will tell you what your Englishman is," said the count, lighting his short blackened *brûle gueule* at

the oil lamp on the table. "Oh, my poor quotations of Horace! *projicere margaritas* —— he is a thorough grocer."

"Suppose he is," remonstrated the chevalier, delicately rolling a cigarette between his natty thumb and forefinger, "suppose he is, reason the more for handling him gently. Here is a man who is mad for a ribbon, a star, for anything that can give him any kind of title whatever. What is the rational course to pursue? To present the affair as feasible certainly, but nevertheless not without its difficulties, its divinities to propitiate by proper sacrifices; between friends, to squeeze as much oil out of this English whale as one can. Instead of this, what do you do? You perplex and alarm him with a railway speculation, outlay of millions, years of waiting."

"At the end of which I attach a splendid bait," interrupted the count, "the title of prince, bestowed by a grateful gracious pope on the enterprising contractor. You have still much of the greenness of spring about you, my dear little friend. My schemes, I perceive, have too much of maturity in them for your youthful vision. Learn this, in the first place, that to tempt an Englishman, who has been in business, there's no lure so great as a speculation in railways, no title, no ribbon, none, though it were as broad and as long as the iron road itself. Learn, secondly, that if I could get the name of this Mr. Jones, the chairman and contractor for the what's its name railroad in England, to figure at the top of a prospectus of a railroad, were it to the moon itself, my fortune and your fortune would be made. How could I guess, that this man was to be unlike all other John Bulls, without love of enterprise,

heavy with objections, full of caution, wanting proper securities, and so forth — devil take him! As if my word was not the best of securities, the word of a Fortiguerra!!!” emphasized the speaker, thumping his breast. “Do you know who the Fortiguerras are, my fine fellow” — (the fine fellow addressed was the flask) — “the oldest family in Italy, nay, in Europe, allied to the Gonzagas of Mantua, related to the Royal House of Braganza ———”

“You forget the Grand Mogul,” added the chevalier gravely.

“Excellent! capital!” cried the count, falling back in his chair in a paroxysm of laughter, combined with a fit of coughing, owing to a volume of tobacco smoke inadvertently swallowed. “Here is an artist! I take myself in real earnest. I imbue myself so entirely with the personage I am to represent, that I positively forget my own individuality. When I die, an event the longer delayed the better, I shall be able to exclaim like Nero, ‘O Rome, what an actor thou lovest!’”

“Some truth in what you say,” observed the chevalier, daintily knocking off the ashes of his cigarette; “only now and then you overdo your part.”

“Not a bit,” protested the count; “I proportion the shades of my colouring to my audience. But what were we talking of? Ah! you were criticizing this railway scheme. Granted it is a failure, nevertheless it will give us some of the advantages of a victory. Through it I have gained two important points. I have *posed* myself before this man, and taken his measure, height, depth, breadth — I know him inside and out.”

“Well, if you have got his size and weight, don’t beat about the bush, but go straight to the point. Fix

a sum, the highest you prudently can, to serve as the golden open sesame of the bureaux, there is always some deaf, blind, halt official to be made to see, hear, and move, — and as soon as you have the money, let the fool have his hobby-horse. To fabricate a document with all the proper state seals and signatures is mere child's play for you."

"So it is, but it won't do with Mr. Jones. He is far too sharp, and we shall never see the colour of his money, short of satisfying him as to the how, the why, and the by whom — *quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando*. Circumstantial evidence will not do with him. Talent and industry can do much, but not supply reality. I flatter myself that I could personate Cardinal Antonelli — his Holiness — anybody. I once acted a bishop in Mexico, a country without its fellow for that sort of thing; and I did it so well, that I actually took myself in, as well as other people. But the local colouring is not at my command here. I cannot borrow the palace of Monte Cavallo, nor ask for the loan of the Vatican, nor get possession of the *Dateria*. Can I?"

"Not so easy in fact," replied the chevalier, in a dandified voice, "but methinks you exaggerate your difficulties. Surely, it has been said by some wise lips, that when a man is in earnest pursuit of a thing, he will swallow even a camel if it stood obstinately in his way."

"Ah! my dear fellow, rules have exceptions. You have no idea how without poetical imagination these islanders may be; how matter of fact they can be. Trust to my penetration, this Englishman will give us a deal of trouble. Even if he be ever caught at all, which I doubt, it must be with some other kind of

chaff. We might try him in the artistic line, with objects of virtu, antiques and pictures. He knows nothing about them, nor does he care a straw for Art; but he might be got at through the ladies. The young one, a splendid creature by the way, has a smack of a painter about her, and seems as inflammable as a lucifer-match. A well-concocted tale of a reduced nobleman obliged to part, but anxious to do so unobserved, with the remnant of a once princely gallery — a few Lionellos, and Lorenzo di Credi; none of your Raphaels, or Correggios; they are too hackneyed. Such a story, I say, would take her fancy."

"It might," said the chevalier, "were it not for that young Mancini (and I am told that he is clever), who, being, as you saw, on the best terms with the whole tribe of them, is certain to be consulted, and as certain to make our mine explode."

"I will undertake to make sure of the young fellow," asserted the count, potentially.

"More easily said than done," retorted the chevalier. "He looks very high and mighty, and puts on the airs of a Puritan. There's some story current about him, in which Bishop Rodipani figures. The particulars I don't exactly recollect; but I remember enough to assure you, that they give little reason to hope."

"To be sure," exclaimed the count; "didn't some one point him out to me as the bishop's nephew? who told me, I wonder? It must have been that rascal of a reverend brother of mine. I will ask him for particulars. Whoever he be, leave the young painter to me; I go bail for him. Nothing so easily tamed as your independent genius: two or three swings of the incensory under his nose, sufficient to inflate his nostrils

with the smoke of the gums and spices of flattery, and an order for pictures, such is my recipe. I will give him a commission, if needs be, of the value of ten thousand scudi."

"Which will not drain your purse dry," laughed the chevalier, "any more than the two hundred thousand scudi you volunteered this morning to invest in shares of the new railway."

"A capital proposal that, was it not?" said the count, laying his forefinger under his left eye, and investing his face in the most blackguard look imaginable.

"Now, you are beginning to make faces," remonstrated the chevalier; "pray recollect yourself."

"Well, well, you are right; let us always look the dignity of our parts. What was I saying? ah! about the two hundred thousand scudi. The proverb runs — Strike hard, if you want to strike home. A few bold strokes of that kind constitute what I call a large style. Mine is Michael Angelo's manner."

"I wish you could have seen yourself at the moment: you were really superb; you looked as much in earnest as if you had had the whole amount in your pocket."

"I was not sure that it was not there. That is the secret of my superiority. Be strongly impressed yourself, if you would strongly impress others. *Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*, as my favourite beautifully expresses it. Are you going already?"

"I must," said the chevalier, looking for his hat; "it is past nine, the rehearsal of the ballet at the Apollo will soon be over, and Amina would scratch my eyes out, if I was not there when she leaves the theatre."

"Ah! the little figurante!" said the count, with a grimace, the racy roguishness of which no words can render.

"There you are again with your grimaces! you are really incorrigible;" and the chevalier looked as he felt, sullen and reproachful.

"Now, don't be sulky; the idea of the little figurante threw me off my guard. O youth! silly youth! to run after such vanes as women, when such staunch friends as Montepulciano and Orvieto coax you to stay. Take another glass."

"Not a drop more," said the chevalier; "I have had enough. It is a mystery how you manage to go on swallowing flask after flask, and that, too, after having emptied one of Mr. Jones's decanters of sherry."

"That is it; you have hit on cause and effect," replied the count. "I correct the acidity of that violent adulterated stuff the Englishman gave us, with this gentle, cooling, genuine produce of the Tuscan hills."

Upon this, the two worthy associates separated. Just at the identical moment, Paolo was knocking at the door of his own studio in Via Frattina.

"Are you here, Salvator?"

"Yes, I am in bed; come in!"

"Don't budge, I am only come to say that I feel dreadfully uncharitable towards some one."

"That is it," returned the voice from within; "hurrah! then you are jealous."

"I am afraid I am; not a very amusing trade, though."

"It will give a relish to your feelings afterwards. The sooner the better, as I told you."

"If they are roses, they will blossom in good time.

Do not go out to-morrow morning before I come.
Good-night, Salvator."

"Good-night, Telemachus, and pleasant dreams."

Paolo went his way home, and Salvator turned himself in his bed, humming —

"Son geloso del zefiro amante,
Che ti scherza col crine e col velo,
Fin del sol che ti mira dal cielo,
Fin dell'onde che specchio ti fa."

CHAPTER XIII.

Nettle and Dock.

GREATLY relieved by the avowal he had made to himself, and the confession to his friend, Paolo slept soundly, and awoke next morning in good spirits. His first thought on opening his eyes, was, "So then, I am in love." Well, he could not help rejoicing at the question being at last solved and settled in that way.

It was but the realization of what he had been so long yearning after; and if a man had ever reason to be happy and proud of being in love, certainly he was that man, ~~considering~~ the object — for, thank God, it was at no common shrine he had been led to worship for the first, and as he felt assured for the last, time in his life. If he had the stuff of a man in him, as he hoped he had, she was exactly the woman to bring it to light. So beautiful, so lofty minded, so overflowing with healthy, noble aspirations! Where the deuce had Thornton's penetration gone, that he should misjudge her as he did? The day would come when his friend would render her more justice. Paolo felt confident of this. She was to be his Laura, his Beatrice, his Muse, his —

Here the image of the chevalier intruded disagreeably on Paolo's mind, and brought his soliloquy to a full stop. But he was not in a temper to be long disturbed by hindrance in any shape. Well, let the chevalier do his best; he, on his side, would do his best also. Of course, he could not expect to secure such a prize, without meeting with competition. Who could see and not love her? Even Thornton had acknowledged the charm there was about her. All that Paolo desired or wanted, was a word — no, only a look — of encouragement, and he would fight all the world to win her.

After all, he had been, perhaps, too hasty in attributing to the visit of the two strangers the motive he had done; perhaps before many hours had elapsed he would be ready to laugh at his own wild suppositions. Most likely, either Mrs. Jones or her niece, during the morning's sitting, would refer to the subject of these new acquaintances, and thus enlighten him. If there were no mention of them, it would indeed be a bad sign. However, let the worst come to the worst, he was ready for any rival.

Amid such speculations, Paolo arrived at his studio in Via Frattina. Faithful to his word, Salvator was waiting for his friend, munching his dry roll and roasted chesnuts, and reflecting on the number of sparrows, daily pensioners, fed by crumbs scattered from his garret windows, doomed this morning to disappointment and hunger.

"And our uncharitable feelings?" asked Salvator, by way of greeting. "As strong as ever, I hope."

"Not so intense as last night," said Paolo.

"They will intensify by and by, no fear. Iarbas has been here."

"Who is Iarbas?"

"Emperor Soulouque, our black friend; he has brought a note for you. I anticipate a crisis."

Paolo snatched the note, broke the seal, and read: —

"Thursday evening.

"Mrs. Piper has taken us by storm. Nothing will satisfy her but our going to Frascati. We are all to start to-morrow at daybreak; we shall be away only three days — one to go, one to remain, and one to return. I am sadly disappointed to miss my sitting. On Monday morning we count on seeing you. I mean, be sure to call.

"Yours in haste,
"L. J."

"Gone!" exclaimed Paolo, dejectedly.

"Gone?" echoed Salvator, starting to his feet in great alarm.

"Yes, to Frascati for three days," added Mancini.

"Bless me! how you do frighten one, I declare! *Son rimasto senza fiato. Non ho sangue nelle vene.* I thought she was for ever gone. Three days is the very thing, neither too much nor too little, just the proper degree of stimulant to bring the precious germ to maturity."

"No need for stimulants, I am afraid," said Paolo; "methinks the germ is ripe already."

"Is it?" retorted Salvator; "ah! what did I tell you? the moment you perceive it the business is done. Never mind this absence; it is all for your good, though

not very pleasant; for what does the libretto say? — *Da quel di che lei perduta, Disperato in bando andai, &c.* You will feel the happier when she returns. It is like leaving one's bed of a winter's night; you enjoy its comfort more keenly afterwards. In the meantime, you can think of her, and speak of her to me. There's a comfort for you."

Truly Paolo had not a pleasant time of it. All his buoyancy, in so far as Miss Jones was concerned, was gone, and every one of his doubts and misgivings returned. Despite of all that he could say to himself, or that Salvator could say to him, he was haunted by the idea that that hideous chevalier was one of Mrs. Piper's party. "We all start to-morrow;" that "we all" was by far too elastic a formula. It would have been far more simple and natural to state, "the Pipers, aunt, uncle, and I," if there were no one besides. Ten to one but the count and chevalier had dropped in while that busybody, Mrs. Piper, was planning the trip, and, discovering that they were Italians, no doubt she had asked them for directions and advice, and all that sort of nonsense. Then Mr. Jones, fancying himself very clever, would request the *padre nobile* and his small satellite to give his party the benefit of their company, and local knowledge. Oh! yes, Paolo could guess it all. There were spare seats for them, of course, in one of the carriages, for two carriages there must have been. The Joneses, Pipers, and a servant, made six; well, one carriage would not hold six, and with luggage too, — it was quite out of the question; they must have had another abominably convenient vehicle of some kind or other.

That was the gloomy side of the note, but it had a

bright one also, and on this Paolo embroidered also very freely. Miss Lavinia did not seem to expect much pleasure from the excursion — “she was sadly disappointed to miss her sitting,” sweet soul! There was honey in the assurance, “we shall be away only three days;” these words clearly implied that she would have been sorry had the absence been prolonged. Then the “be sure to call on Monday” indicated some impatience to see him again. Really the note was most friendly.

Little or nothing was changed in Paolo's external habits of life. He felt Thornton's searching glance was on him, and was on his guard accordingly. For nothing in the world would he have let his friend guess at a result, which Paolo candidly acknowledged to himself was but the confirmation of that friend's anticipations, and at the same time the broadest contradiction of his own. He accordingly stuck to his atelier and his work as usual, even cracked jokes with his comrades whenever an occasion presented itself, but — his thoughts were elsewhere. The only alteration in his habits he ventured on, was the taking a solitary walk of an evening towards Porta S. Giovanni, the way to Frascati.

The three days dragged on, and Monday came, but, alas! bringing back no Lavinia. Mrs. Piper had prevailed on her, explained Mrs. Jones, to stay a few days longer. There were some interesting places yet to be seen, and then the beautiful weather was in itself a temptation to remain in the country. Paolo, with a very lengthened face, agreed to all this, adding that Miss Jones was quite right to profit by this oppor-

tunity to make excursions, especially in such agreeable company.

Mrs. Jones did not think her niece particularly liked either Mr. or Mrs. Piper's company; at least, she knew that Lavinia and Mrs. Piper disagreed on many points. Paolo's mortification at Miss Jones's prolonged absence was greatly soothed by the certainty, that there were no counts or chevaliers of the party. Luckily in this world the dock grows near the nettle. Mrs. Jones had unawares extracted the sting from his thoughts. That was a relief indeed, but it did not prevent his annotating bitterly on his own annotations of the young lady's note. He was glad to see that her disappointment as to her sitting had not preyed much upon her. She knew how to reconcile herself to circumstances. Impatient to return? why should she be so? for his sake, perhaps? a droll enough notion. What did she care for him? *Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore* — Out of sight, out of mind: proverbs are the condensed wisdom of humanity.

Upon this understanding with himself, Paolo, with great consistency, resumed his pilgrimages to Porta San Giovanni, accompanied by Salvator, who by-the-by sang to him arguments of comfort to all tunes, and out of all imaginable operas. He recommenced counting the days; dear me, how many more! one, two, three, four, five, six — at last, on the seventh, there she was queen-like, full of health, of spirits, of enthusiasm about the Belvedere, Tusculum, Villa Ruffinella, Grotta Ferrata, the frescoes of Domenichino, and everything else she had seen.

Certainly, there was no trace left about her of time having hung heavy on her hands; but Paolo had no

heart to find fault, so cordially did she hold out her hand to him, with such frank sincerity did she declare how sadly she had missed him when looking at the splendid frescoes of Grotta Ferrata, adding, in a tone which he could not disbelieve, that she was so glad to be back again, and to be able to resume her sittings; would the next day suit him? She was very impatient to see him at work again. Paolo was by this time swimming in a sea of bliss.

Miss Jones sat for her likeness the next day, and the one following that, for many hours. Paolo was in a splendid vein; the portrait improved wonderfully. The young lady gave him in detail the impressions of the scenery and the works of Art she had seen, and Paolo ceased to wonder that, with such eyes and such a soul as hers, to appreciate the beautiful in all its forms, she should not have found the time long at Frascati. As the course of conversation would have it, Lavinia mentioned the count and the chevalier; this latter with an adorable indifference, which went straight to Paolo's heart. Never had she been more communicative, more expansive, more confidential. Mrs. Jones's manner, always kindly and affectionate towards the young painter, had in it now a touch of motherly tenderness. It seemed as if this short separation had inaugurated a new and more intimate phase of friendship between them. It could scarcely fail that all the gentle and delicate parts of Paolo's character should be brought into play by such genial and exciting influences.

When she was taking leave of him at the end of the second sitting, Mrs. Jones told Paolo that they reckoned on having the pleasure of his company at dinner on the following Saturday. He was to receive

a more ceremonious invitation, but she warned him beforehand that he was not to refuse. Paolo's first movement was certainly to decline this invitation; but, on Miss Jones adding that it really was a *dîner sans façon*, only a few friends, and that she would allow of no excuse, what could Paolo do but bow his head in submission? Had she ordered him to go and take Castle Sant' Angelo single-handed, he would have gone and tried!

Lest we should unwillingly lead our readers into error, we must advert to a circumstance which had its share in the redoubled show of friendliness evinced by the ladies towards the young artist; not that we mean to deny that meeting again, even after so short an absence, an agreeable and obliging acquaintance, was not for something in Miss Lavinia's warm and kind manner towards Paolo: we mean only to say that there was more than one cause for the effect. The fact is that Paolo had been the subject of a rather disagreeable domestic scene, which had made him an object of more interest than ever to aunt and niece, as will always be the case with considerate and chivalrous natures, who see a friend underrated, and unjustly dealt with.

Having now secured a well-organized *personnel*, Mr. Jones determined in his wisdom to shine forth on the world of Rome, in the character of an Amphytrion. To achieve this solemn purpose, he drew up a list of his most distinguished acquaintances, and handed it to Mrs. Jones, with the intimation that cards of invitations to dinner were to be sent out for the earliest day possible. The count and chevalier, as due to their rank, figured at the top of this list, which comprised, besides, Mr. and Mrs. Piper, Mr. Thornton, the Honourable

Captain and Mrs. Paddock and their son, but lately introduced by the Pipers to the Joneses.

"You have forgotten Signor Mancini," observed Mrs. Jones, innocently.

"Who? the drawing-master?" retorted the husband; "I am not going to invite him with people like these."

Honest Lavinia, who was close by, arranging some flowers in a vase, coloured up and said drily, "I have told you more than once already that Signor Mancini is not a drawing-master. He is a gentleman and a celebrated artist, who is good enough to give me the benefit of his advice out of mere kindness. He is as much a gentleman as any of the persons you wish to ask."

"If he *is* a gentleman," resumed Mr. Jones, "he has not the manners of one; at least, if you will allow me to know what a gentleman is. At all events, I suppose I am master here, and may choose my own guests."

"No doubt of it," replied Miss Lavinia, standing very erect; "you may have the enviable power in this instance to inflict an undeserved slight on a person who has shown us all great kindness and courtesy, but do not expect to have me as an accomplice in what I deem wrong. I shall stay in my room on the day of your party, if Mr. Mancini is not invited," and Miss Jones left the room abruptly, with a significant toss of the head.

This scene had occurred after breakfast on the morning following Lavinia's return, and consequently an hour or so before the first of the two sittings last mentioned. Both aunt and niece were still under the

influence of its painful impression, when they reached Paolo's atelier, and their extra graciousness to him proceeded from an instinctive wish to make him amends for the discourtesy of which he had been the unconscious object, by showing how much they regarded him.

Nothing came of Mr. Jones's wrath. Blustering and trenchant as he was, he was no match for his niece, whose spirit and determination always cowed him. Among the cards of invitation, which lay on the table next morning, ready to be sent out, there was one whose blank was filled with the name of Signor Mancini. Thereupon, a silent reconciliation took place between uncle and niece; and it was after this happy treaty of peace, that Mrs. Jones warned Paolo he was to be asked to the dinner-party.

Paolo's heart sank when, in the afternoon of the second day's sitting, black Cæsar brought to his lodgings in the Via Babuino, a big despatch with a seal the size of a crown piece, which contained the promised card of invitation, with a N. B., requesting the favour of an answer. All this fuss (we beg pardon for the expression, which is not ours, but the young Roman's, a thorough stranger to the genteel ways of society) made him augur ill of the *sans façon* of this family dinner, and Thornton, who came in with a similar huge envelope in his hand, at once confirmed his sinister forebodings, saying, —

"A state affair, it would seem, to judge from the proportions of this its *avant courier*. Do you intend to go?"

"I must," said Paolo; "I promised the ladies that I would. Don't you mean to accept?"

"Not I, indeed," returned Thornton; "I did not settle in Rome to be bothered with English dinner-parties. I wish you joy of it."

Paolo held his tongue, and the subject dropped for the present. After dinner he penned two lines of acceptance to leave at the Palazzo Morlacchi during his walk, and went out. Who should he meet on the threshold of the street door, rushing in like a mad bull, but Salvator, in the highest state of elation? The sanguine little painter had joyful tidings, which he longed to communicate, which he now did with sundry snatches of song, as the two friends, arm-in-arm, were proceeding down the Corso.

The glad tidings principally concerned Salvator's betrothed, Clelia. A few days back, she had been obliged to go a good distance beyond Porta del Popolo, to return some guipure she had had to mend. Clelia was very clever with her needle, could embroider, or restore the most delicate embroidery, a great resource to her, when her cameo-work slackened. The way was long, and the sun hot, so she sat herself down by the side of the road to rest. A lady on horseback, attended by a groom, came up at full gallop; and from the red jacket she wore, Clelia instantly identified her as a foreign marchioness, for whom this singular costume had won the nickname of the *Cardinalessa*. She was called besides, from being so constantly seen driving and riding, *Pentesilea*. Clelia accordingly looked at her with no small curiosity. The lady reined in her horse, and brought him up close to where Clelia was sitting.

"Are you ill?" asked the lady.

"No, madam, I thank you," replied Clelia, rising, "I am only resting myself."

"Sit down again," desired the lady; "are you unhappy?"

"Not in the least, madam, I am obliged to you," smilingly replied Clelia, who had remained standing.

"Did not you hear me tell you to sit down?" cried the lady, with a sudden burst of passion. Clelia complied. "Do you live by your work?" continued the stranger, in her former manner. Clelia answered in the affirmative.

"And what kind of work is it?"

"Cutting cameos; but when I have none to cut, I mend lace and embroider on muslin."

"Have you plenty of work just now?"

"Not much," hesitated Clelia.

"Well, then, come to Villa Torralba to-morrow at twelve, and you will find plenty of work there. Ask for the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos, — don't forget the name."

With this, the marchioness wheeled her horse round, and had set off in a gallop, when she suddenly pulled him up again. Clelia was full of admiration at the intelligence, almost divination, the fine animal showed in accommodating himself to the caprice of his mistress. "To make sure of getting access to me," called out the marchioness, "send this to me by one of my servants," and away she was like the wind.

Clelia rose to pick up the something the foreign lady had thrown at her. It was a ring with a large ruby surrounded by brilliants and evidently of great value. Clelia could scarcely believe her own eyes. "One of the fairies of the tale, who drop pearls and diamonds as they go," thought she. Her wisest plan was to take care of the precious deposit, so she slipped

it on one of her fingers, and clenching her hand to make sure of its not falling off, pursued her way. Not a wink of sleep had she that night, so keenly did she feel the weight of the trust reposed in her.

She went next morning to Villa Torralba, but found it no easy matter to penetrate to the presence of the marchioness. Not that there was any lack of male and female servants to do her errand, there were plenty of them about the grounds, on the staircase, in the lofty entrance hall; but all and each seemed quite regardless of what was passing around them; they had enough to do to mind their own business, and their business apparently was to do nothing. At last Clelia succeeded in catching hold of an elderly woman, on whom the sight of the talisman presented by the Roman girl produced some effect, and by whose means, after a little delay, she was introduced to the fairy.

Clelia was shown into a large room, where there were three large marble baths built into the wall. Two female attendants were busily engaged, one in washing, the other in drying and combing a multitude of lapdogs of all sizes, breeds, and colours, the majority of which were waiting for their turn of the tub with exemplary composure.

The Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos, in a morning *negligé*, extending even to her hair, hastily tucked behind her ears, and rather dishevelled, lay coiled like a snake, on a crimson velvet sofa, from which she could command a view of the ablutions going on, though more particularly engaged just then in addressing a beautiful spaniel, who, resting his forepaws on the edge of the lady's couch, was drinking out of the cup of rare China she was holding for him.

On entering the room, Clelia caught the marchioness's eye and curtsied, but, receiving no sign of recognition, she remained standing at the door, waiting the lady's pleasure, thinking the while what a beautiful composition for a cameo there was in the *pose*, graceful in its indolence, of the exquisite little form, with its small hand, and tiny feet, playing at ease in the red and gold slippers, and the rich drapery formed by the ample cashmere dressing-gown floating round it.

The marchioness appeared to see nothing but the spaniel she was petting.

"Drink, Manuelito — my love, it will do you good; my poor Manuelito is quite feverish; Manuelito must get well, or he cannot have his bath," and the little animal, by way of answer, sniffed and wheezed, scraping and scratching to get up on the velvet sofa.

"What is your name?" inquired the lady, abruptly turning to Clelia.

"Clelia, madam."

"Beautiful, I like it. There is a great deal in a name, though people say not. Now guess mine. It is the same as that of one of your Roman heroines."

"Is it Cornelia?" asked Clelia. The other shook her head. "Virginia?"

"Yes, Virginia — how clever of you!" cried the marchioness in delight; "don't touch Manuelito, he will bite you."

"I am not afraid of him," replied Clelia. "Manuelito is not so savage as that, see," and she patted and stroked the spaniel, who, after swallowing his medicine, had gone sniffing about the stranger in a very friendly spirit.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the fairy; "Manuelito always flies at everybody but me. You must possess a charm. There are negroes at the Havana who are charmers."

"If I have any gift of that kind, I have never found it out before," said Clelia.

As if fatigued with the exertion she had made, the noble creole closed her eyes, then suddenly, as if recollecting something, opened them again: "Why did you bring me back my ring?"

"Why?" repeated Clelia; "because it was yours."

"Have you any idea of its value?" asked the lady.

"I think I have; most of our cameo-dealers are also dealers in precious stones, and in this way I have learned something of their worth."

"Well, what do you value it at?"

"About three hundred or four hundred scudi."

"Do you consider four hundred scudi a large sum?"

"Quite a fortune," was the reply.

"And you were not tempted to keep the ring?"

"Tempted? how do you mean? since it was not my own," said Clelia.

"You are an extraordinary girl," said the marchioness; "I liked you the very first moment I saw you, and I gave you the ring to try you," and she laughed merrily.

She seemed to enjoy the fun of her scheme of temptation, and that in so childish a manner that Clelia never even thought of taking offence, but contented herself with asking, —

"And now that you have tried me?"

"Now, I mean to make you my friend," was the prompt answer.

"You are very kind to think of such a thing," said modest, prudent Clelia; "but our stations in life are so different."

"Never mind that," interrupted the marchioness, "you will see: at all events, you must stay with me."

"I shall be very glad to do so, if I can be of any use to you, that is to say, if you give me some work, some occupation."

"I like your way of talking — you can come and talk to me, when I wish it," said the lady.

"That would be a very agreeable office," answered the Roman girl; "but if I am to eat your bread, I must do something more substantial to earn it than talk. Have you no lace to repair, no linen to put in order, iron, or something of that sort?"

The lady desired one of the attendants to call Pepita. Pepita, who was a considerable time in making her appearance — the watchword in the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos' household being, to take things easy — Pepita was a fat, elderly mulatto woman, with a peculiar big yellow turban on her head, and a rather prepossessing countenance. After a short consultation in Spanish with her mistress, yellow turban conducted Clelia to a small light closet not far from the bathroom, where Clelia saw mountains of linen of every variety, and all of which she was at liberty to look over and sort; in short, do with as she chose. These were the instructions vouchsafed to her by Pepita.

And thus Clelia was installed at Villa Torralba, where she spent her days, sewing, mending, cutting out, ironing, &c., to her heart's content, save when summoned to her mistress's presence, or when that lady, which was oftener the case, came and sat in the

closet to enjoy a chat. By express agreement, Clelia went home in the evenings.

A more kind, more generous, more eccentric patroness than the marchioness, it would have been difficult to find. She would carry chocolate and cakes to Clelia, make her constant presents, talk to her of her own sorrows — that is, about Manuelito's ailments — show herself to her in her diamonds and evening dresses, and now and then startle the girl with such questions as these, —

“Have you a lover?”

“Yes,” replied Clelia, blushing, “if by lover you mean a man to whom I am engaged to be married, as soon as we can afford it.”

“Is he handsome, black-eyed, black-haired?”

“No, indeed,” said Clelia, smiling; “he is little, light-haired, and has grey eyes.”

“You cannot love him then?”

“Indeed but I do,” affirmed the girl; “I love him as he is.”

“Is he rich?” inquired the marchioness.

“As poor as a rat, and I love him the more for that.”

“You are the oddest girl I ever saw,” quoth the lady, “to love a man because of his poverty.”

“Poverty has its charms for the poor,” answered Clelia; “it tells us of toil, self-denial, and suffering, and out of such things, springs sympathy.”

The marchioness mused a little.

“What is your lover?”

“He is a landscape painter,” said Clelia.

“Do you think he could paint scenes for a theatre?”

"That he could, and beautifully too," replied the Roman girl; "he is very clever."

"Well, then, I think I shall be able to employ him, I am going to have a private theatre here, and I shall want some one to paint the scenery. You must bring him here some day — I shall tell you when."

Such was the substance of Salvator's communication to Paolo; such the foundation, on which the lively imagination of the little fellow had already raised the edifice of Clelia's fortune and his own.

CHAPTER XIV.

Amphitryon.

TAKING into consideration that Mr. Jones was a stranger, and a rather formal one, it occurred to Paolo that he ought to accommodate himself to the humour of his host, and for once depart from the habitual simplicity of his costume. With this view he purchased a black satin neck-tie, and a pair of gloves of a hazel-nut colour; waiting with trepidation the moment for the display of his finery, and not without a lurking hope that something might yet come in the way of the proposed dinner. But the days passed quietly, and Saturday arrived without bringing him any counter-orders, and there was nothing for it but to dress and go.

The flutter of spirits he had felt on the morning of his first visit to Palazzo Morlacchi was a trifle compared to that he experienced on the present occasion. He was afraid of being too smart, of being too plain, of being too early, of being too late; in short, he was so miserable in his state of suspense, that it proved

quite a relief to plunge head-foremost into the thick of reality, by knocking at the door. The look of the unknown footman, who instantly answered the knock, was not encouraging; for it seemed to say that he needed not to have been so much on the alert for such a guest. A question then arose in Paolo's mind as to whether he ought to leave his hat in the ante-room, or carry it with him to the drawing-room. He remembered having heard the point discussed, but how it was settled he had not the least recollection. There was little time now for debating the *pro* and *con*, and he followed the footman, with his hat in his hand. To such as Paolo, a hat is a precious support in company; it is more than a standing point, it is a countenancer, almost a friend.

Paolo had that gift of quick-sightedness, which takes in at a glance the details as well as the whole of a *tableau vivant*; a most fatal gift to shy people, inasmuch as it makes them nervous in proportion to the clearness of their perception of the host of difficulties they have to steer clear of; whereas your man who can scarcely see beyond the tip of his nose, walks past friends and foes unawares, accosts three wrong ladies before reaching the lady of the house, and intrudes himself on her notice just when he ought to abide his time; and all this with an imperturbable self-satisfaction, due to his utter unconsciousness of the blunders he commits, and of the effect they produce on others.

There were only gentlemen in the room, six in number, comprising Mr. Jones, all in full array of white neck-cloths and gloves to match. This Paolo saw with perfect equanimity; it was just what he had anticipated; but his blood gave a turn, when he discovered that he was the only one who had a hat in his hand. Was he

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to drop it there on the spot, or watch for a more favourable opportunity of ridding himself of the incumbrance? Better go up at once to the master of the house, and make his salaam. Not so easy. There were breakers ahead. Mr. Jones was leaning against the mantel-piece, his back to the door; and so engrossed by a paper he was holding towards an unknown gentleman on the other side of the fire-place, that to all appearance he had not heard Signor Mancini announced.

To force himself, so to say, upon the notice of his host, while evidently engaged in some deeply interesting subject — Paolo was far too discreet for that. The only course he could devise under the circumstances seemed that of moving up in Mr. Jones's direction, and awaiting his leisure. Just as Paolo was approaching him, Mr. Jones happened to turn round, saw the new comer, waved his hand to him by way of salutation, and resumed his former position and occupation. Paolo was sadly put out by this manœuvre; for, suddenly checked in his progress, and brought to a halt midway between the door and the fire-place, he felt extremely awkward, and at a loss what to do next.

A friend in need is a friend indeed, and such in this critical emergency did Count Fortiguerra prove to Paolo. The count bore down upon the young painter with all the majesty of a threedecker under a press of canvas, viz. with extended arms. Paolo felt thankful at heart for this timely succour, and received the count's gracious advances more warmly than he might otherwise have done. Count Fortiguerra professed to be most desirous of cultivating the acquaintance of a distinguished artist, an honour to his country. Only the day before his illustrious friend, Prince Torlonia, had

escorted him over his palace, and pointed out for his admiration Signor Mancini's beautiful fresco, a masterpiece in his opinion, and the count pleaded guilty to the weakness of believing himself to be a little of a connoisseur. He possessed a small gallery of his own, and should be proud and happy if Signor Mancini had time and good-will enough to humour a desire the count had, to add to his modest collection a production of Signor Mancini's brush.

The count was a loud talker at all times, and on this occasion he had his own reasons for wishing to be heard; well, the count's move, and rather obtrusive notice of Paolo, worked a great change in the young painter's position. Just as droplets on a pane of glass will converge towards a bigger drop, so had the chevalier, Mr. Piper, and the youthful Mr. Paddock, one after another, converged towards the point where the count and his *protégé* stood conspicuous, and formed a circle round them. They were in time to hear Paolo state his regret, that for the present he was so busy as to be unable to meet as he could wish the count's kind proposal. Even Mr. Jones and his companion, the Honourable Captain Paddock, doffed their dignity, and approached the other gentlemen.

Such was the posture of affairs, when the ladies came into the room, and rejoiced indeed was Lavinia, whose heart had been full of misgivings on a certain point, to perceive that her particular friend was receiving all proper attention. Nor could he fancy himself overlooked even in the bustle that ensued; he met, from both aunt and niece, with as cordial a welcome as he could wish! What, then, made him redden and look so out of countenance? The truth is, Miss Lavinia wore

that identical dress he had so strongly objected to on the first day of her sitting to him; and what, then, if she did? I fancy I hear the reader grumble forth she was one of a dinner party, and not going to have her portrait taken; what business was it of Paolo's how she dressed?

The reader is perfectly right, but is entreated to consider that the relater of a story is no more responsible for the whims of his *dramatis personæ*, than a photographer for the snub nose or squinting eyes of one of his sitters. The storyteller's duty is to record the impressions received by his personages, so as to allow of their characters being fully appreciated, but not to account for, nor yet to justify, their fancies. It is in order to serve the above purpose that we mention distinctly that the impression made on the Italian by Miss Jones's attire was anything but agreeable.

"Dinner is on the table." The official announcement sets the company all on their legs. Mr. Jones frowns significantly at Mrs. Jones, who looks hopelessly towards Lavinia. Paolo admires the dexterous ease and grace with which the young lady, by a few smiles and nods, assorts the couples, and regulates the order of march. The double doors, flung wide open, discover to the dazzled eye a vista of footmen, lights, flowers, glass, and mountains of silver.

Who first set foot in this land of promise? tell us, heavenly muse. Who but the count? *A tout seigneur, tout honneur*. The illustrious representative of one of the oldest families of Italy knows nothing of English customs, defies English customs, and asserts his right to precedence, by leading in Mrs. Jones with that dignified ease and grace of manners, which art can partly

imitate, but which nature exclusively gives as a right to the highborn. The Honourable Mrs. Paddock, on the arm of the master of the house, smiles significantly at the solecism in manners committed by the Roman, in making Mrs. Jones precede her guests. Minor guns follow, the Honourable Captain with Mrs. Piper, the chevalier and Miss Lavinia. The very small fry are left to take care of themselves.

Paolo avails himself of a favourable opportunity to drop his hat on a chair, and, directed by a graceful wave of Miss Lavinia's hand, quietly sits himself down between Mr. Piper and the youngster Paddock; just the seat he would have chosen for himself, though the position did not appear without some danger from his young neighbour, the ends of whose spotless cravat stick out so portentously, and withal look so stiff and sharp, as really to justify some alarm. But he is out of sight of Mrs. Piper, who is on the same side as himself, and though Miss Lavinia sits opposite, between the count and chevalier, it is in a place sufficiently out of his straight visual ray, to justify his seldom meeting her eye without any show of affected avoidance. Ungrateful wretch that he is! how little he surmises that he owes his present comfortable situation to the provident care of his fair pupil, who had been expressly forbidden to have a mere painter at her side, when there were counts, honourables, and chevaliers to be had. How many such delicate, exclusively feminine attentions are often thus lost upon men's gross perceptions!

Dull work at first, but it will become more lively by and by. Madeira circulates. Mr. Jones particularly requests the count's opinion of his Madeira. The noble

friend sips, and smacks his lips; sips again — must have another glass; buries his chin in his cravat for ten seconds, amid a general silence, then delivers a solemn fiat, that it is the very emperor of Madeiras. A little hubbub ensues; Captain Paddock gives in his most enthusiastic assent. Mrs. Paddock, on Mr. Jones pressing her to taste it, submits, but will not say a word. (Always a Mordecai at our gate.) Count Fortiguerra pompously relates what capital Madeira — indeed, half a century old — he had drunk at the table of his august connection, Don Pedro, the then Emperor of Brazil — it must have been as far back as 1826 or 1827 — at Rio Janeiro. The Fortiguerras, he loudly whispers to Miss Jones, are allied by the female side to the house of Braganza. It was the best Madeira he had drunk in his life, but it did not come up to this; no, it did not come up to this.

This puts Captain Paddock on his mettle: he recollects an entertainment given by the Duc d'Aumale — was it the Duc d'Aumale or the Prince de Joinville? — it was in the roadstead of St. Jean d'Ulloa. — The Captain must wait for a more propitious moment to finish his story. Mr. Jones cuts him short, by calling from one end of the table to the other, to say how, when, and owing to what lucky chain of circumstances, he had been able to secure three pipes of this precious wine from the cellar of H. R. H. the Duke of —, on the sad occasion of that exalted person's demise. Mr. Jones is extremely particular about his wine, he owns — price with him is a secondary consideration. A crust of bread, but a glass of good wine, is his motto. They are going to taste his *Château Margot* — his champagne — he is not partial to French growths, indeed to no-

thing French. (Hear, hear.) Give him old honest port and sherry, that's the drink for a man who is a man. He flatters himself he has as good of either as any one can boast of — he can answer for his wine; as for eatables, his friends must be indulgent. We are at Rome, you know.

Acting upon the impression that Roman meat is not meat, but a spurious imitation of the genuine English article, Mr. Jones apologizes for every succeeding dish in quite a touching way. Paolo feels full of retrospective pity for Lucullus and Vitellius, and such arrant bunglers in gastronomy who could live and die too, under the delusion that they had enjoyed tolerable suppers in Rome.

The recollection of his London purveyors depresses Mr. Jones — he calls for champagne. The liquid gold mantles and sparkles; what melancholy association can withstand that celestial potion? The machine is now fairly set a-going — no lack of the necessary fluid to keep it at full speed. The three big guns recommence firing with renewed vigour: the Honourable Captain is bombarding St. Jean d'Ulloa again; the count is scouring the Pampas among the Gauchos, throwing the lasso, hobnobbing with the Dictator Rosas and Manuelita, not forgetting the narrow escape he had of marrying that amiable lady. Mr. Jones is initiating Mrs. Paddock (a Russian by birth and in feeling) into the glories of the British constitution, and the part assigned in it to the aristocracy, which he incidentally and rather indignantly defends from the charge of exclusivism, showing, in point of fact, and with many illustrations to boot, that it is ever eager to open its ranks to, and assimilate to itself, the best men in the country, irrespective of their

starting point. Mr. Jones underlines the words by the marked emphasis he lays on them. That emphasis says, "Who knows but I may be one of them some day!"

What can be the mighty intelligence, that the chevalier is imparting in the meantime to Miss Lavinia in so subdued a tone, and to confirm which he appeals to the count? The count leaves the Holy Conclave, where he had just arrived, and into which he was introducing his listeners, to its fate; drops his deep bass into a stage whisper; and, after giving Miss Lavinia the desired explanations, adds a gentle hint, the purport of which must be that the matter ought to be kept as private as possible — otherwise, why should she say audibly enough for Paolo to catch her words, "that it would be quite safe with Signor Mancini"?

"No doubt," assents the count; whereupon the sweetest voice in creation informs Paolo *sotto voce* that "only think, a Lorenzo di Credi, two Lionello Spadas, and three Canaletti, are to be had for a trifling sum." Paolo feels grateful for this attempt of his fair pupil, not the first by several, to make him a party to the conversation; he has already noticed and admired her heroic efforts to divert from her aunt, and draw upon herself, the flow of Captain Paddock's confidences, who, twice baffled of his St. Jean d'Ulloa anecdote, in utter despair of obtaining a general hearing, has chosen Mrs. Jones as the recipient of all the particulars of the case. But Paolo, in spite of all his wish to be agreeable, cannot think one way and speak another; and as he thinks or rather knows by experience that similar bargains are usually traps for foreigners, he says so. An unacquiescing little shake of the head from Lavinia, a

spiteful glance from the chevalier — the count is too far away, at San Francisco, to hear Paolo's remark — is all he gets for his sincerity. Served him right. What necessity is there for always telling the truth? Nothing more uncourteous than the truth. Why the deuce cannot he agree with everybody, and let things go smoothly and pleasantly? Speech was granted to man as a means of being agreeable; therefore, truth is best at the bottom of her well.

Is the European horizon likely to continue cloudless, or are there any incipient signs of an impending storm? In plainer terms, is peace likely to continue or not? At the wisdom stage of convivial excitement, into which Mr. Jones has entered with the third course, these momentous questions invite his particular attention. He sees, he regrets to say, dark clouds gathering in the West. Things and names are revived somewhere, offensive to English feelings and notions; things and names which England neither can, nor must, nor will tolerate much longer. Sad as a prospect of war may appear, especially to men of capital, Great Britain has duties, imperative duties, and the sooner France gets a licking the better.

Royal Navy differs *toto cælo* from the views developed by Exchange. England has nothing to fear from the West, but everything to fear from the North. Have an eye to Herat, says the captain; there lies the vulnerable spot of Great Britain's armour. Herat is the key to India; we must have a care that Russia does not put it in her pocket.

Mr. Jones pooh-poohs the notion. Herat is safe enough. India! no fear there; no, no, the danger is not from the North. Must he back his opinion? Well,

not three months ago, at the lord mayor's dinner, a personage — he need not mention names — took him aside, and said to him confidentially, "Mr. Jones, men on 'Change ought to be warned in time: I see great chances of war; France must be humbled." Such were the very words of Lord Ballersdon. The Honourable Captain receives this statement with Homeric hilarity. Lord Ballersdon is a fool; he is in the pay of Russia, everybody knows. Ask Mr. Urksome. Must the captain say from whom he has positive, undoubted information of Russia's designs on India? If he must give an authority, he could give the Emperor Nicholas himself. Yes, Nicholas said to him, not six months ago, at Moscow, "Captain Paddock, had I twenty men like you, India would be mine in less than a twelvemonth." Clear enough, thinks Royal Navy; therefore he says, "Have an eye to Herat, beware of the North, bridle the North."

This salutary warning is roared to such a pitch, that it reaches the ear of the Russian lady of the Honourable Captain, who, more frankly than civilly, begs the West and her honoured lord and master to let the North alone, or the North may give them both a bear's hug. The captain, as red as a turkey-cock, has a retort cooled on his lips by the handing round of ices. With the dessert, Mrs. Piper introduces the Madiais; the moment is ill chosen, — nobody recollects or cares about the Madiais; the subject drops, and there is a sudden cessation of noise. Exhausted Mrs. Jones gives an appealing glance to Mrs. Paddock, and lets it seek the faces of the other ladies. A slight push back of Mrs. Paddock's chair. Mr. Jones, with the greatest alacrity, rises and opens the door; the ladies sweep

through. Paolo would fain follow them, but he guesses that he must not, as he observes that none of the other gentlemen do so, and that Amphitryon gravely resumes his seat.

The scene becomes more jovial. Mr. Jones, Captain Paddock, and the count hurl at each other big names, and momentous state secrets, as if for a wager. Paolo is wearied to death, and his head aches with the Babel-like confusion of tongues. Cheer up, young artist, there is a Mæcenas for you present. The count is in a patronizing mood, and Paolo Mancini is about to have the benefit of it. Pedigree declares that it is a disgrace to Rome that an artist of such transcendent merit as Signor Mancini should remain in the shade. Genius needs encouragement, and his young friend shall have such, if Count Fortiguerra has still any influence or interest. Paolo's name shall be mentioned in the proper quarters — the count will take care of that. His Holiness is a most discriminating judge and patron of Art; so is his Majesty the ex-King of Bavaria. Count Fortiguerra has his *entrées* with both — and — with humility he owns — they are so good as to consider his poor opinion worth having. His young friend may hope everything.

These and such like expressions are accompanied by winks, nods, and significant knittings of the brow, that savour more of the Robert Macaire than of the *atavis edite regibus*. Paolo is perplexed; what does the man mean by all his nonsense and extraordinary grimaces? Is Padre Nobile making fun of him, or is he trying to take him in? Alas! Padre Nobile takes in nobody but himself. The fact is that the good wine has overheated the count's brain, and he is fast losing

sight of that nice boundary, which separates acting from caricature. That is why he overdoes both his patronizing and his familiarity. The chevalier nudges him, treads on his toes, suggests that it is high time to join the ladies. The count demurs, but at last makes a motion to that effect; another bumper, and the gentlemen adjourn to the drawing-room.

The ladies had been left too long alone, not to be a little out of sorts. Still, to all appearance, too much engrossed by the momentous topics of India and war to do much towards enlivening the social circle, Captain Paddock and Mr. Jones fell quickly into the background, and sought some comfortable sofa, or chair, there to ponder or to doze. The count himself, though brisk and talkative at most times, had just now curious intermittent fits of dimness, just like a revolving light, or, if you like it better, like a lamp that is going out. Even the chevalier seemed under the weight of a slight preoccupation, and either, while turning over the leaves of the music for Miss Lavinia, or singing a duet with her, kept one eye constantly on his noble associate. All these little circumstances combined to throw a damp on the evening, and to bring it to a close. Mrs. Paddock was the first to give the signal of retreat, and a general break up immediately followed. The count begged to be allowed to inquire if his carriage had arrived, and was then reminded by the chevalier that he had given orders that it was not to come. Mrs. Jones offered her carriage to the count; but he would not hear of the horses being put to at that hour of the night. He preferred a walk on the strength of the adage that *post cœnam deambulabis*; in fact, the dinner had lengthened out to such an hour, it might be reason-

ably considered as a supper. Another minute, and they were all gone; Paolo the last, but not the least relieved.

Count and chevalier, arm-in-arm, plodded heavily along; the shark and the pilot-fish. The one was in the meekest, the other in the most peevish of humours.

"Now, don't be stupid," expostulated the count; "what harm have I done?"

For all answer to this question, the little man shook off the hold of the big one, who, suddenly deprived of a friendly support, tottered away, exhibiting a strong aversion to the straight line.

"You see what you have done! put yourself in such a beastly state of intoxication as not to be able to walk steadily."

"Come, come," said the count, good-humouredly, placing his arm again within that of the chevalier; "the foundations are rather shaky, but this," with a tap on his forehead, "is fresh and clear. *Spiritus promptus est*; try me on any abstruse topic, metaphysical or mathematical, and you'll see."

"There's no trusting you," went on the chevalier; "really you are worse than a baby; the moment you see the bottle, farewell all earthly considerations — confound the wine!"

"Be quiet, or there is an end of our friendship, now and for ever," said the count, in great earnest, and stopping short. "Perfection is not to be found in human nature, you know. I have got my foible, the foible of Horace, of Cato, of Luther, of all great men. Rogues of my calibre, let me tell you, would be too dangerous if they had not their weakness. You have no idea of the expenditure of nervous fluid, the in-

venting and combining and relating those stories of mine, entailed upon me. It is most exhausting. Man is like a lamp, my dear boy; if you don't feed it, it goes out."

"And so it does if you replenish it too much."

"I positively deny your accusation; I always keep within decent limits. Mr. Jones and that captain were both much ahead of me, that they were."

"They can be so without danger," retorted the chevalier; "they have no part to perform like you."

"Sensibly observed," quoth the count, "though God alone knows whether they have or not. There are more actors in this world than you wot of. In fact, every one is, more or less. But never mind that, let us come to the point. I have a capital scheme in my head."

"Very well, we will let it rest till to-morrow," said the chevalier, carelessly.

"Not at all," insisted the count. "I hold to proving to you this very instant, that I am sober, and that you are an ungrateful little mummy. Yes, sir, while you are accusing and reviling me, I am racking my brains how to make your fortune."

"You are very good, and the foundation of which is to be—?" asked the chevalier.

"Miss Lavinia Jones, sir. She seems mightily pleased with you. Strike the iron while it is hot, and possess yourself of her hand and her money. There's my plan."

"And it speaks highly for your penetration," sneered the chevalier. "Why, a man must be as blind as a bat, not to see there is a flirtation going on be-

tween Miss Jones and Mancini; but you have only eyes for the bottle."

"Do you really mean it?" gasped the count, a little abashed. "Well, never mind; 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' Enter the lists all the same, and ten to one you come off the winner. Nothing young damsels dote upon half so much as little manikins they can carry in their pockets. I have seen many for the sake of such pigmies jilt Antinoüs-like figures such as Mancini and me. Women are so queer!"

"Queer indeed! However, let who will try the experiment in the present case, I certainly will not. It would break Amina's heart, and not for twenty Miss Lavinias would I cost her a tear. One may live by his wits, and still have feelings."

"Ha! feelings!" laughed the count; "you won't go far with that stumbing-block in your path. But so it is, as I said before: nobody is perfect; we all have our infirmity; yours is feelings — mine, the bottle. A great pity, though, such a plot as I had made. I am no novice in this sort of affairs. Did I ever tell you, how I got an heiress for a professional flute-player?"

"Scores of times," said the chevalier; "I know the story by heart."

"So much the better; you'll be able all the better to correct me if I blunder, and judge if I am sober. If I omit any the least circumstance, I'll allow you to be in the right. Well: it was at Naples, now thirty years ago. My flute-player, a poor, but sturdy fellow, was hard at work making love to this German young lady, a perfect scarecrow, but immensely rich; the lady still demurred. What was to be done? I arranged a duel. We went to the Cascine; not to the

Cascine, we were at Naples — I am a little excited, but I know what I am saying. Well, we went to Posilipo: two shots were exchanged; no bullets, of course, and at the second shot my man fell down dead!”

“And married afterwards?” laughed the chevalier.

“Not a doubt, for he turned out to be only badly wounded. All Florence swallowed the canard — all Naples, I mean; I am a little forgetful. The Dulcinea taken in as well as the rest. Her interest was excited. ‘Poor young man!’ she sighed. ‘About to die, and Heaven knows for what trifling cause.’ ‘It was no trifling cause, *gnädiges Fraülein*,’ said I, ‘which made me face death.’”

“Hallo!” cried the chevalier, “so you were the flute-player.”

“It was the flute-player, as I said. Now, don’t bewilder me. So I said: ‘My friend went out to make a boor pay dear for slandering a young lady.’ ‘What young lady?’ asked the Fraülein. ‘Cannot you guess?’ says I. Whiff; my German took fire like a lucifer-match. In due time the invalid made his appearance before her, his right arm in a sling. That was the finishing stroke. An arm in a sling for our sake, is irresistible. There was elopement, reconciliation, *justæ nuptiæ*, blessings, rejoicings.”

“Everything but the money-bags,” interrupted the chevalier; “the heiress turned out no heiress, and all the flute-player got for his trouble was the scarecrow. That’s the wind-up of the story, if I recollect right.”

“So it is, so it is,” roared the count. “Ha! ha! not a single Zwanziger — ha! ha! how I enjoyed the joke! What a memory he has, the sly little monkey.

But for his damned feelings, there is the making of a man in him, — that there is; but his feelings are in the way; and so is the bottle, and so is that stingy English grocer. I floored him though, and the other too. Bless me! what can be his name? my throat is dry as bricks, that it is—”

The count was so far gone by this time, that the chevalier could no longer manage him by himself, and had to ask a belated passenger for assistance — no sooner asked than given — to convey him home.

CHAPTER XV.

Miss Lavinia's Diary.

“DEAR LADY AUGUSTA;

“MEN are very ungracious, ungrateful animals. Show yourself particularly kind to any one of them, and see what you will get for your pains. This is said with due reverence, *apropos* of my Signor Domenichino. The day before yesterday we had a small dinner-party, and you would scarcely believe the trouble I took to have him invited. Uncle declared he would on no account have the *drawing-master*, as he insists on calling him, though he knows, as well as I do, that Signor Paolo is no more a drawing-master than I am; he does so merely to vex me. Well, uncle and I had nearly a quarrel about the dinner; he really made me indignant. I exhausted all my *effets de front à la Rachel*, and at last burned my vessels. If Signor Paolo was not to be of the party, no more would I — and of course I carried the day. And what were the thanks I received for all my efforts and good-will, from the hands of this

precious Domenichino? a cold, distant manner, either no answer at all, or a snappish one. However, he was no worse than the rest of the gentlemen, Count Fortiguerra excepted. I never saw such tiresome specimens of the stronger sex in my life. Mr. Jones was in one of his worst moods — boisterous, bombastic, boastful, and ended by — you can guess what? So did Captain Paddock. Do you know anything of the Paddocks of Paddock in Yorkshire? A good family, the Pipers say, but very poor; the captain is poor in spirit also. I am not sure that my favourite count himself was not a little too exhilarated, but he managed very well, and was not stupid like the other two. Though he has a little of the *bon vivant* about him, he is always the nobleman; besides, he is full of information of all kinds, animated with such ready wit, and not without a touch of real fun, always kept within bounds, though, by good taste. There is, in all that he says and does, that mixture of ease and dignity, in short that mysterious something, that you only find among the high-born. After all, he is not perfect; he is rather noisy, and talks too loud for my taste; but that's one of my prejudices. I hate loud speaking, and Italian habits and ways differ from ours. At all events I prefer his trumpet to the chevalier's cooing whisper. 'That infinitesimal dose' of a man was my neighbour, you must know. He always speaks to one as if he was making love. I hope Signor Mancini did not imagine that anything of that sort was going on between the chevalier and me. More than once I had a misgiving of this kind, and as one does not like to be placed in a ridiculous light, I repeated aloud what the little man had said, and tried to make the conversation less of a *tête-*

a-tête; but all in vain. It does not much matter what Domenichino or any one of these people thinks of me, but one thing I shall take care of in future, and that is not to be in such a hurry to be lavish of my sympathies.

* * * * *

"I may be as sympathizing as ever. I was in a fit of misanthropic humour when I wrote the above. I leave it as it is, as a punishment for having penned such contemptible nonsense. My accusation of ingratitude against Signor Paolo is absurd and odious — how could he ever dream that Mr. Jones objected to his company, or that he owed his invitation entirely to me? As for his moodiness, that is perfectly explained, and I think perfectly justified, by the circumstances. Considering the friendly footing we had been on for nearly two months (you know he was our only visitor), and the habits of intimacy that had grown up between us, Signor Paolo might think he had more right than any of the others to expect to take me in to dinner, and if he felt hurt or disappointed, it shows that it was not a matter of indifference to him. If there is anybody to blame in this matter, it is I myself, for having yielded to uncle's arrangement that I was to have the chevalier, and desert my old friend. I am sure I was well punished by having to listen to all the weak nonsense the little puppy inflicted on me. As to rank or riches, the chevalier may be, doubtless is, Paolo's superior; but there is more wit and originality in Signor Paolo's little finger, than in twenty such chevaliers. Now, I have eased my conscience by clearing Domenichino of the false charge I had brought against him, I have another and more serious cause for

uneasiness — one which preys on my good aunt's mind, and hurts her health. We can blind ourselves no longer to the fact, that uncle is fast taking to drinking. When we dine alone, and spend the evening at home, which, indeed, is generally the case, he gulps down tumbler after tumbler of brandy-and-water, till he gets excited, then drowsy; when we have company at home, or dine abroad, he gets regularly tipsy. The other evening he was disgracefully so. Aunt and I are quite at a loss what to do; he is so touchy and irritable we are afraid to say a word.

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"As I was to sit to-day for my picture, of course we had an influx of visitors. I put it down as a general rule, that whenever one wishes particularly to do some particular thing, somebody comes in your way. First the Pipers, then the Paddocks; it really seemed done on purpose. I was the more disposed to regret this *contretemps*, that I am rather inclined to like Mrs. Paddock; she is an odd enough specimen of womanhood, very masculine, looking much like a Russian grenadier; but she is straightforward, frank-spoken, and ever ready to do battle against everything and everybody that displeases her. But I could not like her at that exact moment. Well, it was past two when at last we could get out, aunt and I, for a drive; as for the sitting, I had given it up hours before. We drove first to Via Frattina, to explain to Signor Paolo why we had not gone to him. He said it was very lucky, as the count had been just calling on him, or, to use Signor Paolo's expression, had forced his way into his studio, by making such a tremendous noise at the door, as to excite alarm in the whole house. You are to understand

that whenever Domenichino expects us, he bolts the door of the atelier, and answers neither knock nor ring, but ours. Seeing him with his hat on, and evidently going out, aunt offered him a seat in the carriage, which was graciously accepted, and we had a beautiful drive to Villa Borghese.

"Domenichino was in a charming humour, and chirped on as merrily as the birds on the trees. The moment seemed a favourable one for me to risk a hint or two about a point, which you will consider what it really is, a very trifle, and yet, as you will see by and by, it has a relative importance. I must premise that Signor Mancini's dress at our dinner, without being quite shocking, was not what it ought to have been. Not a trace of a shirt-collar! he cannot bear them, he once told me they worry him so; black cravat; and then the gloves! light certainly, but brown; and every other man with straw coloured of course; to finish off, high thick shoes of leather, actual walking shoes.

"Now, though I might wish that he would conform more to general usages, still I cannot say that, with the exception of those horrid shoes, which spoil a well-shaped foot, I have any particular objection to either the brown gloves or the absence of the collar, generally ugly enough, Heaven knows. But not so Mr. Jones; and what specially affronted him was the chocolate coverings of Domenichino's hands. 'What does the fellow mean by daring to come here with brown gloves?' cried uncle, rising up from his doze, and adding other amenities that I need not repeat. It is true that uncle was more than half tipsy when he said this. and has not alluded to the subject since; nevertheless, I thought it would be a good thing to put Signor Paolo on his

guard as to what he ought to wear at parties, and thus prevent any such disagreeables for the future.

"With a view to this end, I asked him, not without a little circumlocution — very unnecessary, for he is as innocent and unsuspecting as a babe — well, I asked him where he bought his gloves? Anywhere, he purchased so few that he had no particular shop. I recommended him an excellent one, 'Especially,' said I, 'for gloves for parties,' adding cunningly, 'I mean for straw-coloured gloves.' He never went to parties, he said, and never wore any except black gloves.

"'But you came to our party, and more still, you wore brown and not black gloves.'

"'True,' said he, laughing, 'I made an exception for you.'

"'It was very amiable on your part,' said I. 'Cannot you go a little further, and have gloves like everybody else?'

"'If I may speak my mind,' he replied, 'I must confess that I object to them on principle.'

"'Oh! oh! où les principes vont-ils se nicher!'

laughed I.

"'Laugh, but listen to my reasoning,' answered he, smiling. 'Gloves, as I take it, are worn for the sake of neatness — to keep the hands clean, I mean. So far the custom is rational, and I accept it. Now black gloves, or, if you object to that tint as fraught with lugubrious associations, gloves of any other colour as well as black and straw, answer perfectly the purpose of cleanliness. From the moment you order me to wear any colour on the plea of show, or elegance, or fashion, you cease to be natural; and I have a right to tell you that I am not a man of show, or elegance, or fashion

— that I do not care for such things. I object to your particular colour.'

"'You waste a great deal of ingenuity,' said I, 'on what is not worth the outlay. It were, methinks, far simpler to accept established customs, and to conform to them.' He held up his finger in a playful threat, and answered, 'Beware of what you say; the maxim you lay down has a more extended meaning than you wot of. In fact, it does nothing less than enthrone routine and abolish progress; for all progress, take it as you like, is but a deviation from established custom. According to what you have said, Galileo was wrong, and the Inquisition right.'

"Somehow or other men always get the better of a woman in argument. They have more sophistry at their command than we have. A ready answer failed me at the moment, but I was far from being either pleased or convinced. Not that he was wanting in politeness; on the contrary, I willingly allow, that he carried on the controversy with perfect good-humour, nay, gracefully, but I cannot forgive him for laying such stress upon trifles. Then again, I do not approve of his unsociableness; as though it was a mark of great superiority not to go to parties! How can a young man in his profession ever expect to get on, unless he makes himself known? and how can he manage that, if he does not go into the world? I must absolutely set to work and cure him of this morbid mood. Don't misunderstand the interest I take in this matter. I interfere less for the sake of the artist than for that of art. Believe me, Signor Mancini is destined by nature to become a great painter, and I should for ever reproach myself, were I not to do all in my power to prevent

his hiding his genius under a bushel. One of these days, unless I am more mistaken than I ever was in my life, he will take a very high standing among his contemporaries.

"Another thing I cannot pardon Domenichino, is his prejudice against the count. It is both unjust and impolitic. The count is a friend not to be despised: he knows the Pope, the King of Bavaria, and all the nobility; he is very rich, a connoisseur in painting, and very well inclined towards Signor Paolo. But no! Signor Paolo speaks lightly of him, treats him with the utmost indifference, and protests that he will have none of his patronage. Do you know what came into my mind? That Signor Paolo dislikes the count for being a count. Signor Paolo is a red-hot radical. Mr. Cobden is milk-and-water in comparison. Never was such disdain as Domenichino's for rank and titles. I remember very well the disparaging way in which he once spoke to me of a certain foreign prince — not foreign, he is a Neapolitan, I believe; at all events, Italian — the prince of that English equipage I wrote to you about. I hope, at all events, my Orson was not rude to the count this morning; if he was, he shall have a nice scolding the first time I see him. The count and chevalier take tea with us this evening, and I shall hear what passed this morning in the atelier.

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"There is no end to the surprises this man gives one. Can you believe that he painted a fresco in Palazzo Torlonia, the fresco, in fact, that is the cornerstone of his reputation — the count calls it a perfect gem — and that he has never said a word about it? However, this is not my great piece of news; my dear,

I might give you leave to guess a thousand times, and you would be just as far off from the truth as ever. Now own you would never imagine that Signor Domenichino might ride in his own carriage, if he chose. But the fact is so. It is quite a romance. I had the whole story from Count Fortiguerra. Paolo is the only near relative, as it seems — a great-nephew, if I don't blunder — of a high dignitary of the Church — the count did not tell me the name; but this great-uncle is either a cardinal, or a bishop going to be a cardinal, a very old, very rich, and very influential man. Well, this bishop, or cardinal, for some reason or other, was on bad terms with the family of Signor Mancini — with his father, I believe. It seems that, at the demise of this gentleman, the cardinal made overtures of friendship to Signor Paolo, even went so far as to offer to name him as heir to all his property, on certain conditions, quite honourable conditions; and that this hot-headed youth, this *testa matta*, as the count calls Signor Mancini — he was but a lad at the time — declined the proposal. *Testa matta* as much as you like; we need not be very much afraid of meeting many such. A man must have a deal of the hero in him, who can thus spurn a fortune, and prefer to toil for his daily bread. For my part, I must say, that however foolish the motives which prompted the act may have been, the act in itself is noble and grand.

“My first thought and question after hearing this tale, was whether there were no means of bringing about a reconciliation between uncle and nephew. The count says, perhaps there may be — he will endeavour to make himself more master of the case. He foresees difficulties in a certain quarter, which, however, he

thinks, might be surmounted. He is personally acquainted with the great man in question, though not on intimate terms. Count Fortiguerra hopes to give us more definite information to-morrow, when he takes us to Palazzo Torlonia to see Signor Paolo's fresco. Aunt is really more enthusiastic than even I am about our painter. How happy I should be, if, through our instrumentality, this interesting young man could be restored to that station of life to which he was born! Good-by until to-morrow.

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"I shall not attempt to describe the fresco — you would think I was exaggerating, if I were to tell you the impression it has made on me. I will only say this, that the figures of Diana and Endymion are in the style of the best ancient masters. The foreshortening is really astonishing. The count said, the artist seems to have hunted for some of the most difficult problems of art, for the pleasure of showing how easily he could solve them. And please to mark that this noble production is the work of a young man of two-and-twenty. Now, I shall not tease you with any more of my raptures. Pictures are never valued from description.

"The count brought us excellent news. A little good-will and a little money will easily remove, at least as far as he can see, the obstacles in the way of a speedy and entire reconciliation between the belligerents. The count advises, first, that Signor Paolo should make some small advance, say, write a few lines to a friend, expressive of his respect for his illustrious relation — in short, do something that might efface old unpleasant impressions, and show his good-will; se-

condly, that some small sum should be given to propitiate a certain confidential servant, whose influence is paramount with this clerical dignitary. It seems that all the princes of the Church, even the Pope sometimes, have a confidential follower, to whose advice they listen and attend in most matters. The count mentioned a certain barber, called "Gaetanino," who was all-powerful during the reign of one of the Popes, I forget which. However, whether this be true or not, our dignitary has a favourite domestic, and this favourite can and must be bribed.

"The count professed that he liked plain dealings, and that he always called things by their right names; he said it was for us to consider, whether there were not cases, in which the giving of a bribe was justifiable, and to decide whether this of Signor Paolo's was not one. As for himself, he avowed he had no scruples about the matter, always keeping in view the righteous and lawful end to be gained.

"Aunt and I hesitated a little, but we soon came to the conclusion that there could be no harm, where a man of the count's years and high position saw none. The count added that, but for his wish not to take a step in this affair without our full concurrence and approval, he would not have mentioned this paltry matter of money, which, of course, was exclusively his business. This arrangement we strenuously opposed; and after a long and hard contest, we only carried our point by protesting that we, and not the count, were Signor Mancini's intimate friends. We were so afraid of the count's playing us some generous trick, that we insisted on his accompanying us home, and actually pocketing the money at once, which he reluctantly did.

He would only take a hundred scudi to begin with — if more were required, he promised to inform us. You cannot think with what pleasure aunt gave the sum. It will be in the hands for which it is destined, by to-morrow morning; and the count also volunteered — he is the most obliging of mortals — to sound Signor Paolo, with reference to the little show of good-will that would be necessary on his part. Everything is lost, thought I, if the count venture into those unknown regions; so I hastened to say, that he had already trouble enough on his hands, and that I would take this part of the negotiation on myself. Plenty of thorns and briars I shall have to force my way through, but I shall win the day.

“The count’s behaviour throughout this affair has been admirable; he has proved himself a man of wise counsels, and of exalted feelings. A father could not have shown more ardour in the cause of a son, than he has done in that of Signor Paolo, though God knows, he has had small encouragement to be kind; for Domenichino is a very icicle to him. But there will and must come a thaw towards this good-natured man.

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“Domenichino did not call yesterday, as I anticipated he would, so I sent him a note early this morning, and I am expecting him every moment. I begin to realize some of the difficulties of my undertaking. I am full of trepidations and misgivings, instead of the hopes and confidence of yesterday. That affair of the bribe troubles me; the more I think of it, the less can I reconcile myself to it. I see now, that what is wrong in itself, cannot change its nature, and become right, because the end proposed is good. My heart flutters

as if I had committed some bad action. The life of comparative seclusion I lead, is neither advantageous for body nor mind. This young man's fate is becoming a sort of monomania with me. I can think of nobody and nothing else; I long to be done with him and this wild scheme. Why does it happen that Count Fortiguerra is in mourning, and that none of these princes or marquises open their salons? In little more than two months we shall have the Carnival. I really shall be so glad to have parties, balls, anything that will drive this painter and his affairs out of my head. I want to plunge head foremost into an ocean of gaiety, and be my former self again, admired, courted, floating in the dance, mixing in crowds, a belle among belles. Hark! I hear his step! what a goose I am to tremble so!

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"Oh! my dear friend, what have I done? Have I positively and irretrievably engaged myself to this young Italian? Have I been delirious? Am I awake, or am I dreaming? How came this about? It is more than I can explain in my present disordered state. I feel feverish. As soon as I can think clearly, I will try to tell you all I know about this matter. Pity me, for I am indeed unhappy — no, not unhappy — but utterly bewildered.

"LAVINIA."

CHAPTER XVI.

Lugete Veneres.

It is quite against the grain, that, just at its acme of interest, we break off Miss Lavinia's diary, and thus keep the reader on the rack — for we modestly take it for granted, that we have worked him or her up to a pitch of frantic curiosity to know the issue of our heroine's adventure. But we have at this minute a pressing call on all our sympathies, and one which admits of no dallying with it. Let any one possessed of feeling be the judge.

Confusion, dismay, consternation, reign supreme at Villa Torralba. Manuelito — *Lugete Veneres Cupidinesque* — Manuelito is no more! My lady has been up all night; so has Pepita, so has Clelia, so has the entire household — one and all, comforting and ministering to the interesting invalid. Nothing has availed. *Mors æquo pulsat pede, &c.* At a quarter to six in the morning, Manuelito breathed his last sigh in the arms of his inconsolable mistress.

But who is Manuelito? some reader with a short memory will perhaps ask. Manuelito is — or rather, alas! *was* — the paragon of spaniels — the marchioness's favourite dog, the dear pet that was ailing on the day of Clelia's first introduction to the villa — Manuelito! the delight of mankind, the pride of dogkind! *Lugete Veneres.*

My lady is distraught with grief. My lady is heart-broken. My lady is in fits; gentle violence has to be used to prevent her from leaving her couch and rushing into the adjoining room, where the deceased is lying in

state. Let her see him once more, embrace him once more! "No, no, it would kill you, señora," weeps the faithful Pepita. "It would kill you," repeat all the attendants in chorus. It is a scene to break even a heart of stone in twain. Eau de Cologne, eau de Melisse, sal volatile, elixirs, balsamic vinegars, wines, liqueurs, soups, chocolate, are employed, but without success. My lady grows worse and worse. Messengers by this time are galloping on the road to Rome, in search of members of the faculty of medicine.

"Oh! be composed, señora," entreats yellow-turbaned Pepita, deluged in tears; "collect yourself, for his sake. Think how wretched poor Manuelito would be, if he could see you in this state, — oh, dear!" The hint was suggestive; who can tell, if Manuelito be not watching her from some canine Elysium! A new spirit breathes in her; she rises; her women, in alarm, crowd round her. No cause for uneasiness; her ladyship will be composed — is composed. "Your arm, Pepita; your arm, Clelia." My lady descends to the pleasure grounds of the villa, in search of a proper resting-place for the remains of her darling. The garden unluckily teems with recollections of the dear defunct. Not here — nor there — nor yet farther off, — ah! here, under the shadow of the lime-trees. Physician after physician arrive in due order, and find their expected patient skipping along from garden alley to garden alley, smoking a cigarito. They shrug their shoulders, pocket their fees, and depart.

Nor shall Manuelito be buried like a — my lady was going to say, like a dog, but refrained in time. Due honours shall be paid to his memory. All Manuelito's canine acquaintances shall attend his funeral.

Quick — send hither my lady's secretary. Letters announcing the melancholy event are forthwith to be written to my lady's friends, with a request to those who have dogs to send them to Villa Torralba on the morrow at twelve o'clock, to join the funeral *cortége* of the deceased Manuelito. A monument shall be erected over his grave with his beloved image at the top thereof. Haste for a modeller to model the dear form; a sculptor to consign its beauties to marble; a painter to picture his likeness in glowing colours.

No — no! let no one stir, — it is not fit that such delicate commissions be intrusted to mercenary hands. The marchioness decides that it is an act of duty on her part, to go on these errands herself. Bring round the phaeton with the piebald ponies. Away she drives, swift as lightning.

It was far in the afternoon when the fair charioteer reappeared at the villa. She returned accompanied by a painter, a sculptor, and a modeller. A heap of black crape helped to load the light carriage. A score of guests invited to dinner were waiting her ladyship's arrival. Who in such an emergency could think of dinner guests? Everybody had forgotten them, excepting, fortunately for them, the cook. My lady apologizes gracefully enough, and with streaming eyes recounts her misfortune, becomes excited with her own words, and, forgetting the cause in her excitement, ends by being the life of her party.

On the following morning, an impressive and touching ceremony saddened the precincts of Villa Torralba. Fifty-seven dogs, exclusive of those of the marchioness, seventeen in number — in all, seventy-four dogs of all sizes, breeds, and colours, all enveloped in black crape,

and attended by the whole household, dressed in full mourning — accompanied the body of Manuelito to his last kennel. Pepita, and Hieronimo, the old Mayor-domo, acted as chief mourners in the absence of her ladyship; who intended to have headed the procession herself, nay, was actually on the road to do so, but — fainted away in the attempt. Human fortitude has its limits. Pepita and Hieronimo with their own hands laid all that remained of Manuelito in the carefully prepared grave; on the dead spaniel they placed his red velvet collar, his gilded muzzle, the silver dish with his name engraved on it, out of which he had eaten so many dainty meals, his napkin, his — but let us draw a veil over this part of the scene. Why dwell on such distressing particulars?

The demeanour of the canine brotherhood was all that the bereaved lady could have desired — a just measure of feeling repressed by decorum. The most deeply affected were naturally Manuelito's messmates: so much so that at the moment when the earth was being thrown into the grave, they became nearly unmanageable — struggling to escape so sad a sight. But they had yet one more mark of respect to show; it was written down in the programme, and no eye but was moist when Manuelito's comrades were induced to give a threefold bark — a last farewell, and all was over.

No, all was not over; the dog guests had to partake of a splendid repast, expressly prepared for them. After so much emotion, they must stand in need of refreshment. The marchioness presided with her usual grace at this funeral feast, with what heart may be easier imagined than described. Another half-hour,

and Villa Torralba had resumed its usual every-day appearance. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

In the course of the afternoon, the noble creole, who had made it a point of honour not to stir from home on such a day, finding her seclusion probably rather wearisome, went to the laundry to indulge in a chat with Clelia, a circumstance, by the by, which had happened but rarely of late.

The marchioness had so far recovered from the shock of her spaniel's death, or else mastered her grief so well, as not to make any even the slightest mention or allusion to her sad bereavement; on the contrary, she touched on none but light and genial topics, dwelling much upon the accomplishments of the Prince of Rocca Ginestra, one of her guests on the evening before. What a fine horseman he was! what a capital whip! and, oh, what a magnificent tenor voice he had! Did Clelia know the Prince of Rocca Ginestra? Clelia had no acquaintance with princes, but she knew the prince by sight.

Says my lady, "If he could only be prevailed on to join her amateur opera company, what an accession of talent he would bring to it! A host in himself! By the by, the theatre is nearly finished; where is the scene-painter Clelia had recommended and begged her to employ?" Clelia answered for his appearance on the morrow, if such should be her ladyship's pleasure. Clelia had not dared to broach the subject during the late circumstances at the villa.

"What cannot be cured must be endured, my good girl," observes my lady, philosophically, shaking her pretty head to signify the shaking off the weight of her grief. "Bring your painter with you to-morrow

morning; I am curious to see this sweetheart of yours."

"My betrothed! your ladyship means," said Clelia, with a blush.

"Dear me, child, how you blush!" laughed the marchioness; "betrothed, or sweetheart, where is the difference?"

The result of this conversation was, that by nine o'clock of the next day, Clelia and Salvator were briskly trotting out of the Porta del Popolo, on their way to Villa Torralba; Clelia giving Salvator a detailed account of all the particulars above related, as a key to his new patroness's character; Salvator listening in mute amazement, save now and then for an irresistible burst of laughter, or some irresistibly appropriate quotation from one of his dear librettos. The day was lovely, the air bracing; not a tree but birds twittered on it, not a patch of grass but swarmed with blackbirds. The lovers had not met for a week, and were now going on an errand full of happy promise for them. What wonder if they were in high spirits, or that the narrative, instead of flowing on steadily, proceeded by fits and starts! Their rather quick pace, and the exertion of speaking at the same time, had heightened Clelia's colour. The most skilful hair-dresser or lady's-maid could not have arranged her rich dark curls, and the black veil thrown over her head, to greater advantage than the morning breeze had done; in short, she looked so pretty in her neat though very faded cotton gown and worn-out mantle, that Salvator was quite excusable, if in his admiration of the speaker he occasionally lost the thread of her story, and had to pray of her to begin afresh.

The little man himself, in his big white cravat, enormous shirt-collar, and complete black suit (Paolo's best) dangling over his heels, worn or rather carried with a mixture of natural comicality and assumed gravity, looked so pre-eminently ludicrous, that Clelia could not help now and then interrupting herself to say, with a ringing laugh, —

"Oh! my poor Salvator, what a figure you have made of yourself!"

At which Salvator would stop short, take all the survey he could of his person, and answer gravely, —

"The tails of my coat are rather too long, are they? Better sin by excess than by deficiency, Clelia, eh? Altogether I am sure that I look respectable, parliamentary. You'll see I shall make an impression on my lady, I shall."

A very ridiculous impression, Clelia fears.

"Would that it might be so," says Salvator, "for then my success will be assured. He who amuses is always welcome, don't you see?"

Clelia's account of the *señora* being at last finished, the little painter gave his opinion as to the case; it was clear, exactly such a one as the libretto described in pointed language: *Che sia forse ossessa o matta: Mi da molto a sospettar*. In other words, that the *Señora Marchesa* was cracked. Clelia did not agree with him; the marchioness was in her right senses, and good enough too, but she had whims and fancies, like all great folks, who had plenty of money, and too much leisure. Clelia had had some experience of such people while she was with Bianchini, the celebrated cameoist. As soon as they had chosen one cameo, they thought they preferred another, and when the other was sent,

their rage for cameos was over, and they wanted something else.

"As far as I can judge," wound up Clelia, in her wisdom, "it is the difficulty of getting at a certain object, which whets our desire for its possession; and when it also demands any exertion of our own for its attainment, then its value and our pleasure are enhanced when we get it at last. But those who have only to wish in order to have, experience no satisfaction in winning that, to reach which they have not had to use spur or whip; consequently, they care for nothing in particular, and theirs are only whims, not wishes."

"Just so," assented Salvator. "For instance — but first permit me to tell you that your mantle is changing its colour, turning from black to red —"

"It is not," protested Clelia.

"And," went on Salvator, "for the last six months has been growing thinner and thinner; and just for the last six months I have had the wish in my heart to give you a new one."

"There is nothing the matter with it," put in Clelia; "nothing that I could not set to rights, if I had a little time to myself."

"My opinion is diametrically opposed to yours," calmly announced the little man. "A new one you shall have; but now let me go on, will you? I was then going to say that, for instance, the amount of pleasure I have had and have, in hoarding my paoli one by one, towards the purchase of this cloak, or whatever you call it, and in figuring to myself your pretty look on receiving it, is quite incredible, I assure you. Now, if I had at all times twenty, or even ten, scudi

at my command, all the pleasure I have had in trying to save up two scudi for you would have been lost, would it not?"

"And what you are pleased to talk of as my pretty look on receiving it, wouldn't have been so pretty as it will be — but, no, you want the money yourself, for really you are out at elbows, my poor Salvator."

"Not so bad, not so bad, my dear; my black velvet suit only needs a little tailoring to be as good as new."

"And your linen is in such a lamentable state; you have scarcely enough for a change; and your stockings — dreadful!"

"As to stockings, I contemplate a radical reform in that respect. I consider stockings rather as an article of luxury than —. Bless me! two blackbirds, I declare." Salvator could not see a blackbird without being frightfully excited.

"Pity you haven't a grain of salt in your pocket," laughed Clelia.

"*Proh pudor!*" remonstrated Salvator. "What was I about to say? something beautiful and highly philosophical, I know."

"About stockings, or blackbirds?" suggested the girl.

"About saucy lasses, for whom nothing is sacred, not even white cravats, and parliamentary array — kuckerikoo!"

"Don't be foolish, and make haste."

"More easily said than done," remarked Salvator, piteously; "how can I make haste with this confounded appendage I have to drag after me?" Paolo's trousers

had been tucked up in a hurry to fit Salvator's little limbs, and now the fastening of the left leg had given way, and a good twelve inches was revelling in the dust under his foot, and tripping him up at every step.

"Holy patience!" pouted Clelia, "how awkward these men are!" and kneeling down on one knee, she managed to turn up the obnoxious surplus of cloth, and to fasten it inside with pins.

"You are the handiest, nicest, kindest, most blessed little wife, that ever fell to the lot of a harum-scarum monkey. I must give you a kiss for your pains."

"Be quiet," cried Clelia; "don't you see that there are people at the gate?"

"I see two horses, which are not likely to tell tales," said Salvator.

"And a man close to them, perhaps my lady's groom. Make haste; if my lady goes out without seeing you, God knows when you will have another chance."

Had not the fear of missing my lady interfered with Clelia's usual clear sight, she might have discovered at a glance, as she passed through the gate, that the person in charge of the horses was not one belonging to the marchioness's establishment, and that on both horses were men's saddles. As to Salvator, he was a poor observer at all times, and a poorer one than ever at this moment, when he conceived his fortune was at stake.

Clelia left him at the foot of the marble stairs, while she hastened in search of her mistress. The señora was nowhere to be found in the house. Pepita had not seen her for the last hour. Clelia, in a great

flutter of spirits, rushed down by a back stair, going straight to Manuelito's tomb. But no marchioness was there. Clelia made the tour of the grounds, and was going to give up the chase in despair, when she be-thought herself of the shooting gallery, where the marchioness often amused herself with practising at a mark. Clelia made for the shooting gallery. It was built along the wall, at the bottom of the garden behind the house.

The door was ajar; Clelia peeped in, saw her ladyship talking with a strange gentleman, and drew back hastily. A lioness surprised in her den could not have looked fiercer than did the marchioness, when she rushed after Clelia.

"What impertinence is this?" she asked, in a voice of thunder, her eyes emitting sparks of fire. "How dare you intrude on me?"

Poor Clelia was more dead than alive: she humbly begged pardon; she had come to say, that the scene-painter was waiting her ladyship's commands.

"Confound you, and your scene-painter," stormed my lady; "begone both of you; I don't want him, or anybody — begone."

The girl had not waited for the second "begone" to take flight.

Salvator's face lengthened considerably on hearing of the untoward change of mind, which had knocked down the edifice of his future grandeur. He expressed his firm conviction notwithstanding, that if my lady had seen him, he would have made an impression which would have given another turn to the matter. As it was, however, he owned that he could devise nothing better to do than to take himself away, and since

Signora Penteseleia had not done things by half, but had included Clelia in his disgrace, or him in hers, as the case might be, had not Clelia better depart with him, and they might look at blackbirds at their leisure? What did she think?

Clelia's first impulse was to go, but she resisted it, and, upon second thoughts, determined to remain. The señora was quick and fanciful, but she was also kindly, and there were great chances of her repenting of her passion, or, more likely still, forgetting it altogether, and requiring Clelia's services again as if nothing had happened. Salvator, therefore, had to make his exit alone, which he did, humming *sotto voce* an operatic air, most appropriate to the circumstances, to the effect that —

“Il Pascià poter di Bacco,
Colle code dentro il sacco,
E strappandosi i mustacchi,
Alza i tacchi e sene va.”

Clelia, on her part, glided away quietly to the room where she usually sat, and began to work as well as the state of her trembling fingers would permit.

Certainly not more than half an hour had elapsed, before she received a hasty summons to the presence of the marchioness. Clelia was not slow to obey, following Pepita who had brought her the message. She was led to the spot, where lay Manuelito's mortal remains. There, seated on a bench, under a lime-tree, Clelia found her mistress. The lady, looking rather confused, it must be owned, asked —

“Well, where is the scene-painter?”

Clelia, surprised at this unexpected question, answered timidly that the scene-painter was gone.

"Gone!" exclaimed my lady, starting up and stamping her foot. "Is every one here gone crazy, or is there a conspiracy to make me so? I ask for a scene-painter — he comes — I am ready to receive him, and then I am told he is gone. Ah! everything goes wrong since I lost my Manuelito," and she burst into a passionate fit of tears.

"Don't, pray don't, señora," entreated Clelia, distressed. "I'll go, and bring the painter back this minute," and she was hurrying away.

"Where, in the name of wonder, is the girl going?" cried the lady. "Cannot you understand that you will never overtake him if you go on foot? Pepita, have a carriage ready this very instant, and go with the girl. Make haste!"

The carriage was soon ready, and Clelia and Pepita started in pursuit of Salvator. They found him at no great distance from the villa, squatted on a stone, and watching with intense interest the gambols of some blackbirds, on a patch of grass bordering the road. To explain the nature of their errand, to take him into the carriage, and bring him back in triumph to the villa, was the affair but of a few minutes. Salvator evinced no greater surprise at this new turn of the wheel of his fortunes, than that conveyed by his giving forth with the greatest zest the two hackneyed lines from the *Barbieri*: —

"Donne, Donne eterni Dei,
Chi v' arriva a indovinar?"

Clelia's prophecy was realized in full. The impression produced by her little friend on the señora was one of unbounded hilarity. Do what she would to

control herself, the struggle was vain; she succumbed to fit after fit of hearty laughter. Salvator stood the ordeal beautifully; he did not so much as wink, but seemed quite absorbed in an artistic survey of the grounds. At last, her paroxysms having abated, the marchioness was able to speak.

"I understand that you are a scene-painter," she began.

"I beg your ladyship's pardon, I am a landscape painter, in the style of Salvator Rosa, but I do paint scenes occasionally."

"In what theatre have you been employed in that capacity?"

"In none," said Salvator, "but I have painted scenery for private theatricals."

"That alters the case," quoth my lady. "I want a first-rate scene-painter — some one who knows all about it."

"I do know all about it," asserted Salvator.

"But how can I be sure that you do?"

"Try me," was the laconic reply.

"Well, I will: it is now eleven o'clock; I give you till six to produce a specimen of your skill."

"I ask no more," said Salvator, "that is, if all requisite materials are ready."

"Nothing is ready," replied the noble creole. "Take the carriage, go to town, and get all you require."

"A canvas of the proper size," objected Salvator, "requires time to be prepared and stretched."

"Ah! but time is the only thing I cannot afford. Can you paint only on canvas?"

"I can paint on *anything*," emphasized Salvator.

"A whitewashed wall?" interrogated she.

"Perfectly," he answered.

"Then follow me," and she led the way to the shooting gallery, in which that part of the wall behind the target had been recently whitewashed. Pointing to the space, the marchioness said, "There, then, is your canvas; make haste, and remember that you are to paint so as to produce a good effect from a distance, but from near it must look all blotches and patches."

Salvator muttered something irreverent about carrying bats to Athens, and bowed himself out of his patroness's presence. We need not follow him to Rome, nor yet back to the shooting-gallery, though we may imagine him there with towels pinned all over him to protect Paolo's black suit, painting with a will, and singing scraps from manifold librettos. To make a long story short, we will only say that before the appointed hour, Salvator had achieved a page of tropical vegetation — mark this stroke of policy, if you please — as was sure to find its way to the heart of any native of the torrid zone. Palm and banana trees in the foreground, the ruins of a temple half choked by enormous cactuses in the middle, and on the horizon a perfect *torrisco*, or jungle of cedars, — these were the main features of this remarkable composition; to deepen the local colouring, the painter had generously sprinkled about red flowers of the size of melons, and a moderate allowance of monkeys and variegated parrots.

And did not her ladyship clap her hands, and scream with delight, at this delineation of the dear familiar trees, and monkeys, and parrots, and summon the whole household to come and admire it? And did not her ladyship next grow frightfully agitated at the recollection of her country, and be on the very point

of crying her beautiful eyes out, only catching sight in time of Salvator swaddled in towels, almost die of laughing instead? And when on close inspection, her ideal of horrible patches and blotches was discovered in plenty, what transports could exceed my lady's transports? Was there ever a painter to equal *her* little painter?

And on dinner being announced, who but the small man must sit opposite to the great lady, with his betrothed by his side, and be feasted with choicest dainties and choicest wines, — just as if his next task were to get a fit of tipsiness, or of apoplexy?

Salvator ate and drank like one who had breakfasted on a halfpenny roll at eight in the morning, and cracked jokes and quoted from the libretto with the hearty zest of one whose natural flow of spirits, ready at all times, is quickened by success, and the prospect of a fortune. The marchioness protested over and over again that a more amusing fellow did not exist in creation.

Clelia spoke little; probably she was not the least happy of the three. And so, it was settled, *inter pocula*, that on the morrow the newly appointed scene-painter in ordinary to her ladyship should enter on his functions. On their road to their respective homes, Salvator rather triumphantly asked Clelia, —

“Now, was I right or not when I told you, that I needed only to be seen to make a favourable impression on the señora?”

CHAPTER XVII.

Miss Lavinia's Diary.

"DEAR LADY AUGUSTA,

"I BEGIN to feel composed enough to give you a tolerably intelligible account of what has passed. Twenty four hours of reflection, united to aunt's kindly advice and tenderness, have calmed the first tumult of my feelings. I now clearly see my position, and honestly accept it; and to be quite frank with you, I am reconciled to it. In my eagerness to please, in my zeal to serve, I authorized hopes, which I have not the heart to disappoint. At all events, I did not do so when I ought; indeed, a concourse of strange circumstances had thrown me so completely off my guard, that when those hopes clothed themselves with words and asserted their existence, all my presence of mind deserted me; I could find nothing to say but what passion might fairly construe into acquiescence. Do not judge me harshly — do not call me silly — he had shown himself so noble! he was so tender, so respectful! and so utterly wretched! he — but I promised you a clear explanation, and I am giving you instead enigmas. Have patience with me; my mind is still so ill at rest, that I cannot help my thoughts running off into all sorts of speculations.

"The conclusion of my last letter to you — I don't mean the hasty postscript, but what went before, though I cannot recall the exact phrase — must have shown you the state I was in, when Signor Paolo was announced. I really was, without exaggeration, half distracted. Reflecting since on my agitation, so dispro-

portioned to the cause, so little natural also in one of my buoyant spirits, I cannot help imagining that a mysterious presentiment of some impending decisive event must have oppressed me. Probably he saw at the first glance that I was disturbed, for he asked at once if I were ill, or if anything had happened to distress me. In my perplexity I caught at this opening to say, 'Yes, that something was distressing me, and a something connected with him.' He looked startled and uneasy at this announcement, and said hastily, 'He hoped I was not going away.' His voice quite faltered. I answered, 'Oh no, not yet.' You cannot think what a brightness spread over his face, 'and how his eyes sparkled! 'You gave me a terrible fright,' he said, adding that now, any other communication I might have to make, however unpleasant, he should be able to bear.

"'To prevent your fancy taking a wrong flight a second time,' said I, 'perhaps I had better make no more preambles, but tell you that I have a request to make to you, a favour to ask.'

"'A request, a favour of me!' he exclaimed. 'And pray, is it a fear of my refusal that disturbs you?' These last words were said with a beautiful smile of kind meaning.

"'Exactly so!' I answered, quickly; 'I am exceedingly set upon your granting me this favour, and I am not at all sure that you will.'

"'Try me, at all events,' he said, with another smile.

"'You know, don't you,' I went on, concealing my increasing anxiety under an appearance of playfulness, 'that women are born busybodies, and cannot resist the

temptation of being diplomatists in a small way?' His eyes were fixed earnestly on me, as if to divine my words before they were spoken. 'Well, I want to be a peacemaker. A little bird has whispered to me, that there exists something like a feud between you and a venerable, kind relation of yours, who ——' I dared go no further, stopped by the change of expression in my listener's countenance: it was literally fearful; his brows lowered — his lips and nostrils quivered with scorn and hatred.

"'You allude to Monsignor Rodipani — to that gem of a bishop as well as an uncle.'

"He spoke in such a bitter tone that I only bowed assent.

"'May I ask, signorina, who revealed to you this relationship?'

"I did not feel sure that I was justified in saying who, so I kept silent.

"'The count, no doubt,' he went on; 'it is like one of his tricks. What right has that buffoon to interfere with my private affairs?'

"This contemptuous way of speaking of an estimable nobleman roused my indignation, and restored all my courage.

"'I beg, Signor Paolo, you will speak in my presence with more respect of a gentleman for whom I have a real esteem. Pray, understand that the only person who has ventured to interfere with your affairs is — myself. So pour out the vials of your wrath upon me — exclusively upon me — as the offence, if offence there be, is exclusively mine.'

"He replied in a very subdued tone,

"'Pardon my warmth; it was not, could not be, in-

tended for you. Your motives, I know, cannot but be the purest, the noblest. Will you let me hear what it is you wish me to do?"

"This was spoken so calmly, and so gently, that a ray of hope came and cheered me into believing that I might yet be the conqueror in this struggle. I said accordingly, —

"‘Though your manner is not very encouraging, it shall not prevent my attempting to perform what I consider to be a duty. You will listen to me, will you not?’

"As he did not speak, I continued:

"‘I can perceive that you have, or that you fancy you have, legitimate causes of complaint against this connection of yours. I will even allow that you have right on your side. But is not forgiveness of injuries the sublimest prerogative of a noble soul? The bishop is old, infirm, most likely repentant — perhaps, he often gloomily meditates on death, which cannot be far distant for him, and, so meditating, wishes to be reconciled to his only near relation, before going to render his last account. Could you, would you refuse him this consolation, before he dies?’

"‘If he is in pressing need of this great consolation,’ said Signor Paolo, drily, ‘let him ask me for it, and I will then consider what it becomes me to do.’

"I answered: ‘Your words are both haughty, and, I regret to say, unfeeling. A man of monsignor’s age and station in life may reasonably object to making advances, when he is uncertain in what spirit they may be received. Remove that uncertainty. Send him a line — just one line, breathing duty and submission.’

"At this word, Signor Paolo grew black in the face, and through his clenched teeth, exclaimed, —

"'Never, never! an act of submission from me! Not to secure eternal life! All hell would laugh and paradise weep if I did so. Is the tortured to beg forgiveness of the torturer, the victim on the scaffold of the executioner? That man was the torturer and executioner of my family. He cursed my parents on the day they became man and wife, and ever after shrank from them as though they had been impure criminals; he allowed my father — my father, innocent of all offence — to rot in a prison, while, had he only raised his little finger, he could have had him righted; he allowed my mother, his own niece, in whose veins ran his own blood, to faint away on the steps of his palace with the fatigue of long waiting; he allowed her to die slowly of a broken heart; and when I was cast on the world at seventeen, an orphan and a beggar, he did his best to add degradation to my misery — yes, he proposed an infamous bargain to me, that I should discard, as an unsightly garb, my father's name — his unsullied name; I was to sell it to this judge in Israel for thirty pieces of silver.'

"I don't know what impression they may produce on you — paper is but a poor conductor of the electricity of passion; but the words, voice, and look made me feel as I never felt before in my life. I was ready to cry, and fall at his feet, and beg him to forgive me, but I could not speak a single syllable for the lump in my throat. Do you believe in magnetism — in that mysterious power which puts your will at the mercy of another's will? I begin to do so; he might have commanded me at that moment, and I should have submis-

sively obeyed. So young! so heroic! I can't describe to you how he looked, standing there alone — one against the world! Even I, striving to lay another burden upon him! So preposterous of me to compare him to any one; and yet the only way I have of making you comprehend at all what I mean, is to say he was like Mario as Ravenswood, when he hurls at the Ashtons that contemptuous curse, *Vi disprezzo*. Do you remember how it always made us cry, and long that we could have helped him, and given proper courage to that poor little Lucy? Well, I felt a thousand *thousand* times more, only I could not shed a tear, or show any feeling — just as if I had been turned into Lot's wife.

“At last I stammered out some sort of apology. I said how sorry I was for giving him pain, and that the only excuse I could plead for my indiscretion was the great interest I felt in him, my sole prompter. It went to my heart to see how instantly this pacified him. His face cleared, and he even smiled on me; it was like a ray of sunshine putting out a fire, for every lurking trace of anger disappeared. I had never heard him speak with the voice with which he asked me, ‘Do you really take an interest in me?’

“‘How can you doubt it?’ said I, almost indignantly.

“‘In fact, how could I? Had you not felt for me, would you ever have done me all the good you have?’

“‘The credit you give me is so little deserved that you mortify me. What have I ever done for you, who truly have done so much for me?’

“‘I will tell you,’ he said, gravely; ‘you have satisfied the great desire of my nature — that craving after sympathy of the softest kind, and without which

man is, and must be, for ever incomplete; you have shed around me all those refining and elevating influences, of which God has given the secret and privilege to women; you have made me a far better, far richer, far happier being than I was when I first met you. Is that nothing?

“‘Ah! don't say that, Signor Paolo. Good works, to be meritorious, ought to be consciously done, and I am too honest to say I tried to confer any of these benefits on you.’

“He said, ‘I don't see the necessity of the intention; the good produced is no less a good — the recipient is no less benefited, though it may be done undesignedly. What is it to me though the rose be unconscious of its perfume, and the nightingale of the charm of its song, and the sun of its beneficent action on men and things? For me it is enough to know that the sun, and the nightingale, and the rose do me good, to feel thankful to them, and to bless them. Allow me on the same ground to feel thankful to you and to bless you.’

“To be thanked and blessed in such a strain is a trial of a new kind, I can tell you; up to that moment I had no idea that praise and blessings might be more difficult to bear than abuse. Perhaps it was only the effect of his voice. There were tones in it such as I had never heard in his or any other voice before — tones that made my heart beat high and fast. So I hastened to reply, ‘If I am to accept your thanks for the past, it is on the condition that you help me to deserve them for the future. Is there nothing I can do for you *wittingly*?’

“‘Ask, rather,’ was his impetuous rejoinder, ‘if there be anything you could not do for me. Have you, then,

no conception of your power over me? I am like soft wax in your hands, ready to be moulded to any shape you please. There are stirring within me strange energies, either for good or evil; bid them take a lofty aim. I am, as it were, a child groping his way in the dark — illumine my path, and make me good. I feel as if I had something here and here,' pointing to his forehead and his heart — 'something like a golden thread worth discovering. Help me, and make me great. Be my good genius; be my muse; be —'

"He gasped for breath as he looked me full in the face.

"A poor muse, but a willing one,' muttered I, scarcely knowing what I said, I was so much moved; 'what must I do to make you good and great?'

"He rose and cried, with outstretched hands, 'Bid me be so through you and for you.'

"The burst of passion with which this was said left no doubt as to its meaning. Those large eyes of his, riveted on mine, were too full of eloquent comment on what had fallen from his lips, to leave room for any misunderstanding. The intensity of my embarrassment amounted to positive agony. I could think of nothing to say, and yet speak I must, or how would he construe my silence? It generally happens, so at least I have read somewhere, that a woman in such a dilemma is sure to say or do the very thing that increases the difficulty of her position; just like a bird but partially caught in a snare, which in its frightened eagerness to disengage itself, only gets more and more entangled. This was the case with me. What do you suppose that I did but put on a lively air, cruelly belied by the thumping of my heart, and say in a would-be spirited

manner, 'Do you know, Signor Paolo, this looks like a declaration in due form?'

"'It is,' was the quick answer.

"I cannot tell what change came over my countenance at these words. I suppose I must have *looked* indignant, though I confess to my shame I did not *feel* so. Perhaps my cheeks on fire — all my blood had rushed to my head — gave him the impression that he had affronted me; for, joining his hands in supplication, he said, hurriedly, 'Do not be offended. For God's sake, do not mistake me. My heart was too full. I must speak or die. It was in no spirit of presumption that I said what I said; we feel our own worthlessness, do we not? and yet we aspire to heaven. It is in such a spirit I regard you. It is in all humility that I lift up my hands and cry, "Unworthy as I am, let me try and deserve you."'"

"Was there ever a lover's suit more gently or modestly urged? I was fairly conquered, and I gave him leave to try. In what words I do not know, but I know that I did so. He half shut his eyes, like one dazzled, and put his hand on his heart as if in pain. 'Then I am blessed indeed,' he murmured; 'it is almost too great joy to bear; you are an angel; yours in life and death.'

"Aunt, who, during the last ten minutes, had been absent from the room, reappeared. Oh! had she come only a few seconds sooner! She was so struck by his extreme paleness, that she asked if he were ill. 'Yes, ill with happiness,' he said; and so saying he knelt down at her feet, laid one of her hands on his head, then, drawing it down to his lips, kissed it fervently,

and without another word departed. As for me, I fell on aunt's neck, and sobbed aloud.

* * * * *

"I had so far succeeded in mastering my emotion as to be able to speak, when the sound of uncle's voice made me hurry to my own room. It was then I added that confused P. S. to my last letter, which must, I am sure, have sorely perplexed you.

"Uncle detained my aunt till dinner time, and afterwards visitor succeeded visitor, as if on purpose to vex me; the chevalier, the count, Captain and Mrs. Paddock, all came. We had tea, and plenty of talk, with interminable lectures from Mr Jones on 'English Railroads' and the 'Bank of England.' Fancy with what interest I must have listened. I could see that aunt was half distracted with impatience. However, *à quelque chose malheur est bon*. I made use of the opportunity to beg the count not to trouble himself any more about our little scheme, as I had found Signor Paolo quite intractable on the subject. The count was full of regrets, the more particularly as the hundred scudi had been actually paid that very morning to the person he had mentioned to us, and everything promised well. He proposed to return me the money, and let the loss be his; of course, I would not hear of any such thing. I am not sure that he will not carry out the plan single-handed; he hinted as much. Who knows, after all, but that the old bishop will relent, and himself make the first advance to Signor Paolo?

"At last, every one was gone, and I might say good night and go too. Aunt soon came to my room, and I made a full confession of what had passed between Signor Paolo and me. Her first feeling was

rather one of pleasure than of pain. She is so fond of him, she said she was perfectly sure he would make me happy. But when she came to think of Mr. Jones, her heart misgave her, nor was mine better assured. Signor Paolo was, there was no denying the fact, under the present circumstances, about the last man Mr. Jones would accept as a husband for me. And as to my marrying without Mr. Jones's consent, that was an absolute impossibility. 'You are entirely dependent on your uncle, my poor child,' said my aunt; 'it is my fault, all my fault. Had I only been a little prudent, a little less credulous, I should have been able to help you through this difficult pass. But, though no longer young when I married a second time, I was utterly without worldly experience, and knew no more about marriage settlements than a child of six years old. All that was mine is now your uncle's, and I have not a penny I can call my own', and while she was saying this, the poor soul wrung her hands, and her eyes turned into fountains. It was now my turn to give consolation, which I did as best I could, and then once more we discussed Signor Paolo. Our long and anxious consultation left me aware, that all I could expect from my aunt, at least as long as this state of bewilderment lasts, is the warmest sympathy, but not the guidance I need. So I took the lead myself and began, 'You can enlighten me on one point, which once clear to me, I shall see what my future conduct ought to be. Do you think that what I said to Signor Paolo — I mean that the sort of encouragement I gave him — entitles him to consider me as — engaged to him, and must have and has been so construed by him?'

"She reflected for a minute or so, then replied, 'If I am to speak conscientiously, I must say, yes.'

"Then I know what I have to do,' said I. 'As an honest girl, I must abide by the consequences of my imprudence, put my trust in God and in the chapter of accidents.'

"Unless,' said aunt, and then hesitated. 'But no — it would break his heart.'

"I entreated her to speak openly to me.

"I was going to say,' she went on, 'unless you were to appeal to Signor Paolo, and—'

"And prevail on him to set me free — in fact, deny my own words; is that what you mean, dear aunt?' She nodded assent.

"Well, come what will of it,' I rejoined, 'I will never do that. Rash I may have been, selfish and unfeeling I won't be.'

"Aunt took me in her arms, and kissed and blessed me fervently. 'God bless you, my child! you are a noble creature.' But I need not repeat what further she said; you know how partial she is to me. So, you see, it is all settled. I am engaged, and intend to let things take their course.

* * * * *

"Am I really in love with this young man? indeed, that is really more than I can say, I am sure; at any rate, not in love as heroines of novels are. I think him handsome, to begin with, and a genius in painting: as to that I have not the least doubt. I admire his many fine qualities, his original turn of mind; above all, his simple, generous heart. His conversation is

agreeable to me; his approbation flatters me; I like him to be near me; in short, none of the young men I have met up to this day ever either struck my fancy or interested me as much as he does. But is this real love? Love! Can I lay my hand on my heart, and say honestly that my whole soul is wrapt up in him, as the phrase goes — that he is the sunshine of my life — that it would break my heart if I were separated from him? To none of these and other fine things I have read of in novels, can I plead guilty. Either I am not born with such exalted feelings, or the romance writers over-colour their pictures for the sake of effect. On the contrary, far from thinking him the most perfect of mortals, I am keenly alive to his short-comings, to his prejudices — I was almost going to say, to what is ridiculous in him; positively, some of his absurd notions about dress, &c., deserve no other name than ridiculous. Nay, if the truth must be told, there is even fermenting within me at this very moment something uncommonly like a leaven of irritation against him, for the world of trouble he is bringing on me. I was so happy, so without care, before I knew him. Ah! well, I am nevertheless resolved to do my duty by him, so long as he does his by me — I mean, continues modest and submissive. Woe to him if he—! Much will depend on his behaviour at our first meeting again.

. . . . In spite of my grand airs, I turn hot and cold only to think of it. Alas! be a woman of the world as much as you will, learn to sweep majestically into crowded assemblies, and to stand the gaze of hundreds of admirers, what does it avail? The moment you meet a certain pair of predestined eyes, the Juno vanishes, and there remains in her place an arrant cow-

ard. However, I should not advise him to put on conquering looks, or—

* * * * *

“Conquering looks! he is the meekest, the gentlest, the discreetest of lovers. He has been here. Oh! could you have seen his confusion! how white and red he turned! how his voice shook! it was absolutely painful! I had to encourage him. He has thought of another subject for a picture, and sketched it in already: Beatrice (of course, Beatrice means Lavinia) revealing herself to Dante; the scene is in the thirtieth canto of the *Purgatory*. He was anxious to know if I approved of the subject, and of the manner in which he thinks of treating it. I agreed that the subject was a fine one, and, of course, the sequel is a rendezvous. We are to go and see the sketch to-morrow, and, at the same time, I am to give him another sitting. Only two or three more sittings, and my portrait will be finished. Visitors came in and interrupted our conversation. I am glad to say that the circle of our English acquaintance widens apace. I am often now straitened for time. He quietly dropped into a corner, but though I did not look his way, I still felt his eye was ever on me, and — if ever eye expressed adoration, his did. Dante must have looked thus, when he met the shade of his Beatrice. I was quite touched. I do, indeed, think that I love him.

* * * * *

“The Mancini are of a noble family. You will find a number of them mentioned in Maunder’s *Biographical Dictionary*. Cardinal Mazarin’s nieces were all Mancini, and all married very high. Three were duchesses, if I don’t mistake, and the fourth a countess.

The name sounds well, ten thousand times better than that dreadfully dubious monosyllable, Jones. On this one subject I do agree with uncle; he can neither hear it spoken nor see it in print, without a shuddering anticipation of its being used as a target for ridicule. I know very well that this is a mere vulgar prejudice, for what can there be in a name, that it should make or unmake a man's claim — I don't say to respectability, but — to refinement and to move in a certain rank? Well, though my reason tells me, that we really lay too much stress on what *he* calls 'accidents,' yet I cannot help shrinking from Jones and liking Mancini. Signora Paolo Mancini *tout court* may look rather meagre, but it is at least euphonic. If he were to settle in England — Signor Paolo I mean — I have not a doubt in the world of his being knighted. Was Rubens a knight or baronet? I forget. I hear you say, a knight is a poor pittance — poor indeed for one who till lately never even thought of a husband under a marquis. Ah! bygones must be bygones now. My lot is cast in a humble sphere, and I must reconcile myself to it. After all, there is a probability, or rather perhaps a possibility, that his relation the old bishop may leave him a fortune, and enable him to take the position his birth entitles him to. Yet, why should I want a fortune left to him? His genius ensures his making one; and even if poor, is not genius an excellent passport into the highest society? Who cares whether such men as Sir E. L. or C. S. are rich or poor? They move in the best circles — nay, are included among the guests of royalty. No one but feels honoured by their notice.

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“When we reached the studio this morning, we found the gentleman in a towering passion, *à propos* of some arrests that were made last night. You can’t imagine what violent language he used, abusing everything and everybody. I can understand that his feelings should be far from friendly towards the powers whose troops occupy his country. Let us only consider what we should feel if we had a French or Austrian garrison in London! I can understand also that he should find fault with the government of the Pope. It must be galling to have an old priest lording it over one. But that he should attack the principle of royalty itself — that he should denounce all the European Governments as immoral, nay, unchristian, all aristocracies as selfish and corrupt, all social distinctions as mere shams — that *was* more than I could bear, and I frankly told him so. ‘Whatever you do,’ said I, ‘don’t attack my beloved aristocracy — English aristocracy I mean — that is, if you care that we should remain good friends. My reverence for it is unbounded.’

“He looked rather thrown back, but replied, ‘I wish they may deserve your reverence. At all events, it is very stupid of me to dwell upon politics. I shall do so no more,’ and he painted on for some time in silence. His fit of taciturnity did not last long, however, and presently he began talking as cheerfully and pleasantly as usual. A great blessing, is it not, that he should be so — docile is the word that falls from my pen, only that is not a nice expression to apply to one’s future husband. I certainly am aware that I have great influence over him, but I shall always use it for his good. Sincerely speaking, I feel that I have

in fact to educate him. He is primitive, full of asperity, uncivilized, but a diamond in its rough state; yes, but a *real* diamond, which only wants polishing to send forth brilliant rays far and wide. I mean that my hands shall bestow this polish. A proud and noble task it will be to refine and raise to its natural level this rugged nature, and to have both the power and the will to do so. Now for the climax. My sitting over, I was about to rise, when he stopped me, and knelt down to mark out with chalk the outlines of my foot on the floor.

““Why do you do that?” I asked, and he answered, ‘That I may kiss the spot on which the sole of your shoe has rested.’”

“Own that it was delicate and poetical, and, of course, I did not grudge or refuse him this innocent gratification: what woman would refuse to give happiness at so small a cost? Now roaring like a lion, anon cooing like a dove, whatever his other deficiencies, certainly my Domenichino does not sin by want of originality.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

Optimism and Pessimism.

PAOLO would not have changed his lot for that of the mightiest monarch on earth. No throne but seemed low, no crown but seemed valueless, compared to that throne and crown to which he aspired. There was but one Lavinia in creation, and that one he might, nay he would, one day call his own. What prospect in the world so glorious as this! and that he, of all men,

should be chosen for that triumph — the thought had something maddening, mingled as it was with retrospective terror unutterable, lest it should have been otherwise, and joy without end at the dear reality. Paolo's happiness, in short, was so intense and complete, that it seemed to him a foretaste of heaven. But for a deep sense of kindly pity towards all of his sex who had missed being the chosen of Lavinia — but for an irresistible yearning to pour into some friendly bosom the exuberance of his felicity — Paolo would have lost all consciousness of still belonging to this mortal world, so high did his soul float on the wings of enthusiasm, so luminous the atmosphere, so ineffable the harmonies, so celestial the dews, in which it revelled.

The friendly bosom, of course, could be no other than that of Salvator, and he it was who had to bear the brunt of this new psychological phase of Paolo's mind. As an enthusiast of the deepest hue, as Paolo's ardent friend and admirer, as one over head and ears in love himself, and who had, to the best of his power, encouraged his friend to enlist in the amatory band, Salvator was ready and qualified at all times to act the part of sympathizing confidant to his brother painter; but never more so than at this particular juncture, when, owing to certain circumstances, his own mental diapason had reached a pitch but little, if any, short of that of his excited leader.

Salvator, in fact, had several legitimate causes for elation. His fortunes, since we lost sight of him, had thriven wonderfully. To his title and functions of scene-painter in ordinary to the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos, had been added in rapid succession those of

poet, designer of costumes, director of choruses, and prompter. In short, the active little body had become the Atlas of the theatrical department at Villa Torralba. Nor was this shower of honours and appointments the only mark of encouragement he had received at her ladyship's hand. Other tokens of his noble employer's favour, far more substantial, and no less welcome, had followed apace. Thanks to these, Salvator had been able to get rid of his only crying debt, the one to his late landlord, been able to buy the long-desired silk mantelet for Clelia, the long wanted suit of black, and three changes of linen for himself, and, last not least, to hire a decent room in the vicinity of Paolo's studio, and to pay a quarter's rent in advance.

When we add that, after all this outlay, the little painter found himself undisputed master of one-and-thirty scudi, actually jingling harmoniously in his pocket — one-and-thirty scudi, with which he was at a loss what to do — the reader will rightly understand the revulsion of feeling attendant upon such an unprecedented — we were almost going to say unnatural — state of affairs. To give an idea of Salvator's elated mood, it will suffice to say, he actually proposed point-blank to Clelia, and with the utmost gravity, as they were now out of the reach of poverty, to marry at once. To one whose imagination could travel at such speed on his own account, the aërial flights in which Paolo was indulging seemed quite in the common course of nature. Nay, occasionally, Salvator's Pegasus would devour space and time, at a rate too precipitate even for Paolo, and stoppages and rebukes would follow. Thus, for instance, Salvator would hear of no term of probation for Paolo — probation forsooth — when the

young lady was smitten to the very core of her heart, and was probably on her knees, trying to win a consent from that old bear, her uncle; *al suo pie la sven-turat.*

"Oh, Salvator!" remonstrated Paolo.

"Salvator, here; Salvator, there; I haven't been making love for four years not to know something of women's ways by this time," and allowing no opportunity for any more objections, off went the little man, depicting Paolo as the happiest of husbands and mortals, driving his carriage and four, and giving princely entertainments to his friends in the splendid Villa Mancini — that was to be.

"How you talk, Salvator! as if I cared for villas and entertainments," protested sentimental Paolo. "No; it is her heart that I want, and a quiet nook, where I can hide my treasure from every eye but my own. I shall be jealous, very jealous."

"Ah! indeed," quoth Salvator; "that alters the case. *Gia la fiera gelosia; versa tutto il suo velen.* If you are jealous, by all means have a quiet nook; only not too far out of the way, or you know I could not visit you; though, to be sure, I am in a fair way to having a gig of my own. I don't suppose you mean to give me up, or Clelia either, eh?"

Here there was an angry protest from Paolo against so offensive an hypothesis, followed by a counter protest from Salvator, that, as his practical view of things was unpalatable, perhaps the best plan was for him to hold his tongue, a resolution only formed to be broken, succeeded, as it immediately was, by an *ex-abrupto* motion from the little man of "Suppose we were to fix

on the same day for both our marriages? A capital idea that, — what do you say, Paolo?"

With the exception of sundry of these little ebullitions, Salvator, as a rule, was content to take his cue from Paolo, before bringing to bear on his friend's effusions any of those choice scraps of his operatic repertory which the analogy of sentiment or of situation prompted. For instance, a fine tenor voice would occasionally inform the public — at least, such part of the public as chose to loiter over the Pincio after dusk — that there existed *in rerum naturâ* a certain young lady (name not given) — *Bella siccome un angelo*, whom Heaven had created on purpose — *Il ciel l' ha fatta nascere* — for a certain gentleman of the singer's acquaintance, which gentleman having set it down as an incontrovertible fact, that *Quanti beni ha terra e cielo, l' amor suo mi può donar*, gave fair warning to any one disposed to question his assertion, that *Suoni la tromba, intrepido; Io pugnerò da forte*, and so on.

These points settled and resettled to their mutual satisfaction, our two *innamorati* would leave the Pincio, with perhaps a parting apostrophe to the moon, when there was one, and repair to their separate homes with heavy steps, but light hearts, to meet again on the morrow at dusk, under the obelisk, to repeat much the same things, and so on evening after evening.

If there ever was a spiritual passion, it was this of Paolo's, so exclusively and entirely did it feed on the past and the future, so little did it demand from the present. Lucky that it was so, for the present was very parsimonious to the young dreamer. Never, at any period of their acquaintance, had he seen so little of Miss Lavinia (the lessons for some reason or other

were stopped altogether), and that little always in the presence of strangers; never had she meted out to him with so chary a hand those imponderable and invaluable tokens for favour, which in the time gone by she had showered on him.

Was Miss Jones's reserve a sacrifice on the altar of prudence, or was it a part of her educational scheme for Paolo, or the result of a vague notion of having given so much already as to be fairly excused from making any further outlay? Be this as it may, Paolo was perfectly satisfied with the little he received. His happiness was independent of outward circumstances; his love, his faith in her and himself, his recollections of what had been, his fond imaginings of what might be, were all-sufficient for him. Truly, Paolo bore his own paradise within him.

He was now determined to make a clean breast of it to Thornton; but Thornton seemed equally determined to give his young friend no chance of doing so, at least in the natural way which Paolo would have preferred. Ever since the Roman had dined at the Palazzo Morlacchi, no reference whatever to the English family had passed Mortimer's lips. Until his confession were made, each day that went by brought with it a fresh feeling of remorse to Paolo; so one fine morning he took the bull by the horns, and said, hurriedly, —

"You were right after all, Mortimer, — I am in love with Miss Lavinia."

"No news to me," answered the Englishman, with a start, however, which gave the lie direct to his words; "thus far the first part of my prophecy is fulfilled; now for the second."

"And pray what is the second?" inquired Paolo.

"Waste of time and of powers in pursuit of a chimera, disappointment, misery, and gnashing of teeth."

"Might you not as well prophesy *new* powers created by love divine, some noble work the result, her hand the prize and reward of success?"

"Ay, her hand to be sure," sneered Mortimer. "Let us have it a match by all means. Were there ever two lovers better assorted? youth, health, rich blood, smooth skin, on both sides. Quick! send for a priest, and let us have the *conjungo* pronounced on these two bodies. Never mind the souls — they may match or not; who cares if they do not? Not you for one. You would marry on such terms; yes, you would if you could — thank your stars that you cannot."

"I protest to God," cried Paolo, enthusiastically, "that her beauty is her least attraction to me; it is her soul, her divine soul, that I covet, and which I must conquer or die."

"You have known this lady for two months, seen her, I believe, at most perhaps thirty times; seen her more or less in a *pose*, that is, in the natural attitude of a young person who wishes to attract. By what mysterious process have you, on so short a trial, acquired as thorough a knowledge of her soul as if you had made it yourself? Either you labour under a delusion, or you are gifted with miraculous penetration."

"Two predestined souls," answered Paolo, "need but to come in contact for a second, in order to recognize, and have a thorough revelation of, each other. In fact, they are but the two halves of a whole tending with irresistible force to reconstitute itself. Now you may sneer at your ease."

"I will do better than that," said Mortimer. "Though you tempt me sorely, I shall leave you unchecked to your Platonic theories. I will ask you only one sober question — Are you prepared to thrust yourself on a reluctant family?"

"I would rather die," said Paolo, sharply. "No; my motto is, *Chi non mi vuole, non mi merita* (who will not have me, deserves me not)."

"Very well, that is all that is necessary, for then you may renounce any more speculations as to what is an impossibility for you. You might as well set about wooing the moon, or one of the stars to come down and marry you, as this young lady. Can you bring yourself to suppose that Mr. Jones has raised this flower with all the care and expense he has done, merely to see it bloom on the bosom of a poor Roman painter?"

"I may make a great name?" suggested Paolo, half proudly, half deprecatingly.

"My dear boy, were you Phidias, Ictinus, and Apelles rolled into one, do you think Mr. Jones would ever consider you his equal?"

"Not his equal!" repeated Paolo, in a sort of shout, and starting off his seat.

"Not his equal," quietly asserted Mortimer again. "Man is never so well pleased as when he can draw a line between himself and his fellow-man, and write upon it, 'No trespassing allowed.' This drawing of lines of demarcation is an art in which we Englishmen excel; we practise it even against our own kin. As far as foreigners are concerned, we place them exactly where we place our own poor relations; not more illiberal in this, however, than your own haughty ancestors of imperial Rome. Yes, we look down upon

them as we do upon 'debilitated cousins.' You shake your head, my wise friend; you think the picture overdrawn. I would swear to its having been taken from life, and a good likeness also. You may pound an Englishman in a mortar; but you will never pound out of him the conceit that he is made of finer clay than other mortals. Mr. Jones was born and brought up in this creed, and in this creed he will die. Add to pride of race, pride of money, and look to your laurels — chances I mean."

"I know you don't like to be contradicted on certain topics," said Paolo, "or I should have something to say."

"Speak it out; never fear contradicting me. I court contradiction for once."

"If so, what I had to say is this," resumed Paolo, "that unfortunately for the success of your argument, it proves too much, and to prove too much, you know, is to prove nothing. Race-proud and purse-proud as Mr. Jones may be, he is far less exclusive than you make him out. No one can treat the count and chevalier more politely, and yet they are foreigners."

"But the count and chevalier, child that you are, have handles to their names, and that makes up for the original sin of their being foreigners. A title is a talisman no true-born Briton resists. England is the paradise of title-bearers. Titles govern us at home, represent us abroad, command our armies, manœuvre our fleets, and with some exceptions — all rules have some — fill every office of trust, honour, and emolument. Titles make our laws, our fashions, our rain and sunshine. Our daily papers register the comings and goings, feastings and fastings, of these celestial bodies; and a

little of this *prestige* extends even to titled foreigners. Such are not the rose certainly, but made in her likeness. Now you have the secret of Mr. Jones's politeness to counts and chevaliers. The day you are a marquis — you need not redden as if I accused you of wishing to be one — that day, if you were as stupid as an owl, the uncle will be at your feet, and the niece —”

“Don't say so of her,” interposed Paolo, with great warmth; “she is far above such paltry feelings; I know it, know it for a certainty;” and Paolo, with a flush of infinite complacency, related the conversation that had once passed between him and Miss Lavinia *à propos* of a certain engraving representing a bevy of young ladies adoring a coronet.

“All that sounds very sensible,” rejoined Mortimer; “but let me remind you that theory and practice are two things, not one. I have seen liberals of the sort you describe fall flat before a mere ‘honourable.’ However, our business lies not with the young lady now, but with the well-to-do middle-aged uncle, and the likelihood of your winning his good-will and money-bags.”

“Let us leave his money-bags out of the question; I am not, thank God, driving a bargain. He may keep his money or throw it out of the window, for all I care. I don't want it; I despise it,” protested Paolo.

“Indeed! Suppose, for supposing sake, you win the girl; you must have some of the money-bags also; or, my dear fellow, on what do you intend her to live? Beauties do eat, I assure you.”

“I intend her to live on the fruit of my own labour,” said Paolo; “I have done pretty well these two last years, and I have saved something.”

"Your poor earnings and savings would not pay her dressmaker and milliner's quarter's bill. Consider now, as you have not considered before, that your goddess is accustomed to a certain style of living, which — I really don't say so from the spirit of opposition — which costs rather more than young painters can readily afford. Carriages and footmen, lady's-maids, and that sort of thing; and other sorts of things, that would be unintelligible to you at present, are not to be had without well-filled money-bags."

"Well, then, they must be done without," quoth Paolo.

"You cut the Gordian knot at your ease," returned Mortimer. "You, the native of a land where people generally live for themselves, and not for their neighbours; where, as Madame de Stael expresses it, 'the empire of self-love is almost null in society,' and both men and women of fortune speak as naturally of travelling by the diligence as they would of their carriage and four. But we are more civilized than that in our happy island; we live for society, and society returns the compliment; she metes out to us her consideration, and assigns us our place in the scale, in exact proportion with the external show we make, that is, of the amount of money we represent. You have thriven, therefore you deserved to thrive; such is the broad and not unphilosophical principle on which, as of necessity, society acts. She has no time to inquire into your moral and intellectual worth; but she can see at once your equipages; reckon the cost of your liveries, and the number and quality of your guests. In a community thus constituted, you understand the paramount importance of the appendages of wealth; they are part

and parcel of respectability, the *status civilis*, the *toga virilis*. He or she who loses them, loses caste. Brahmins and Pariahs are not alone to be found in India, and the said he or she sinks into the limbo of Nobodyism. And such would be the sorry fate of Signora Lavinia Mancini, were she deprived of any of the splendour of Miss Jones. What do you answer to this?"

"That you are describing an impossible social state, one that could not hold together for a single week," replied Paolo. "To begin with, who could marry in such a world?"

"Few would, and few do. Marriage is too costly a blessing to be indulged in without a tolerable income, which, translated, means 1,000*l.* or 1,500*l.* a year. Our young people of the carriage and footman class — a very large one in England — do not marry on less."

"And what becomes of the majority, who have not the indispensable 1,000*l.* or 1,500*l.* a year?" asked Paolo.

"They remain bachelors, and seek for equivalents. Society's legislation makes nobody better, wiser, or happier."

Paolo, looking perplexed, sat thinking for awhile, then said gravely, —

"Even if every syllable of what you have been telling me were Gospel truths, I would not despair; for the day she loves me — *loves* me, you understand — she will be willing, nay happy, to shake herself free from all these conventionalities, and to dare both mud and rain, leaning on my arm."

"Of a certainty she will, if *that* day ever comes," was Mortimer's answer; "but will it come? 'Don't

flatter thyself with being much loved by a woman who loves herself,' says Pythagoras. Two great passions cannot co-exist. Drunkards and gamblers care nothing for love. With a worldly woman, love is quite a secondary affair — the primary, is the world."

CHAPTER XIX.

Miss Lavinia in Déshabille.

MEANWHILE a certain seed sown by the count at Mr. Jones's convivial board — we mean that gentle hint for the private use of Miss Lavinia, about sundry wonderful pictures to be had almost for the mere trouble of the taking — well, that tiny seed, then, duly tended and nurtured, had so far grown and prospered as to give a fair promise of bearing fruit.

We have more pressing business on hand just now, than to enter into any detail of the skilful tactics, by which the two worthy confederates pushed on their new scheme. Besides, the process is as old as the world. We have inherited, all and each of us, from mother Eve a tender point, which puts us at the mercy of the first comer, who chooses to tickle it. Now, the count and the chevalier were first-rate hands at this sort of game, and under their clever management, both uncle and niece's vanity was easily excited; this was no sooner the case, than difficulties were made to arise, and competition to start up. Prince So-and-So was on the scent of the hidden treasures. Duke What-is-his-name had dealers out in search, and some Cardinal or other had received *carte blanche* from his Holiness to secure the "gems" for the Vatican gallery. To make a long story short, after being well tantalized and

brought to the proper pitch, Mr. Jones and Miss Lavinia felt like conquerors flushed with victory, when, late one night, and under the personal superintendence of the count himself, the "splendid remnants of a once princely gallery" were carried up to Palazzo Morlacchi, and deposited in Miss Lavinia's studio. There was as much mystery and as many recommendations to secrecy on this occasion, as if, instead of six small pictures, six barrels of gunpowder had been sent, for the purpose of blowing up Castle Sant' Angelo on the morrow.

The most immediate consequence of this eventful deed was, that Paolo next morning, scarcely an hour after his conversation with Mortimer, received a special summons to the presence of his English goddess. The *taboo*, which guarded from all eyes profane the six master-pieces, was not to extend, the reader may recollect, to Paolo. An exception in his favour had been asked by Miss Jones, and willingly conceded by the count. The command was couched in a note from the young Roman's *diva*, consisting of one line and a half, dear and precious at all times, doubly so now. The pretty autographs of which she had been so lavish up to the day of Paolo's passing the Rubicon, had stopped altogether ever since, and the young Roman was literally athirst for the even, steady, elegant hand-writing, every external perfection of which represented to his eyes — of such stuff are lovers made — a corresponding perfection of the writer's inner soul. Needless to say, he drank in eagerly each word of the blessed missive, and hastened to obey the summons.

He was met in the hall by Miss Lavinia's maid, evidently waiting for him, and ushered by her into the *sanctum sanctorum*, the young lady's private library

and study, wherein he had set no foot for — what appeared to him ages. Paolo was asking himself, with a heart that beat hard against his ribs, what could be the meaning of this sudden shower of favours, when an inner door was impetuously opened, and Miss Lavinia ran towards him, and with a little shout of triumph, exclaimed, "We have got them at last; come and see." With these words she led the way to that part of the room enclosed by a screen, which she held as peculiarly *her* atelier, and, pointing to six pictures of different dimensions ranged against the wall, she added, with great volubility, "Six jewels, are they not? we had a narrow escape of losing them. I will tell you all about it by-and-by; but there are people in the drawing-room just now, so I can't stay even for your congratulations — I leave you in good company," and she was off like a dart.

Paolo was disappointed, to be desired to look at pictures, when he had anticipated something, he scarcely knew what, but something very different; and, worse still, to be told to proceed to the inspection without the balm of *her* presence. However, he had a duty to discharge, and he set himself to it conscientiously, though with a very sorry face. He examined all and each of the pictures long and closely, took them up one by one, carried them to the window, carefully scanned the names or initials on them, scanned their backs, wetted a corner of his handkerchief, and rubbed some apparently suspicious points, and at last returned them to their place, and sat down before them with as disconsolate a countenance as that he wore when we saw him for the first time seated in front of his own Brennus and Co.

Miss Lavinia surprised him in this melancholy contemplation. Her features, too, had undergone a change in the interval of her absence; a cloud had been gathering on her brow, which the sight of the young painter's elongated face was little calculated to disperse, and the inflections of her voice had lost much of the buoyancy they had revealed only a quarter of an hour ago. "You don't seem to enjoy the company of my favourites very much," said she, with the shadow of a shade of pique.

"I am sorry, very sorry, not to be able to sympathize more warmly with you," said Paolo, trying to speak kindly and cheerfully.

"Perhaps," returned the lady, and the voice had a deeper tinge of bitterness — "perhaps you consider such masters as Del Credi and Spada as beneath your admiration."

The Italian looked up at her in astonishment, and replied, "Have I ever done or said anything which could lay me open to the imputation of the monstrous self-conceit your words seem to imply?" He paused, as if expecting some answer, but as there came none, he went on: "If I have, pray let me know when and how, that I may make honourable amends. I have the greatest respect for the names you have just mentioned, and rank *their* productions very high," with a marked emphasis on the word *their* — "I mean those that are really theirs."

"Do you mean to say that these pictures are not genuine?" asked the lady, sharply.

"To the best of my knowledge they are not," was the dry, decided answer.

Miss Lavinia started, and impatiently crushed a

letter she was holding in her hand. This movement did not escape the keen eyes of the young painter; he added, with considerable warmth and earnestness, "I need not repeat how I regret to say anything that annoys or disappoints you; but am I wrong in believing that what you wanted in sending for me was honest advice, and not flattery?"

"Oh! as for flattery, no one can accuse you of any talent that way," retorted Miss Jones. Uttered in a different tone, the words might have been a merely playful repartee; as it was, they were weighty with reproach.

"Is it a fault, then, to speak plain truth?" exclaimed Paolo; "must one guard against it as against loaded pistols?"

"One ought, at all events, to guard against allowing preconceived notions to warp one's judgment," said Miss Jones, coldly.

"What preconceived notions could I have in this matter?" asked Paolo, his face growing dark.

"The buying of these pictures was the count's proposal; that was enough to prejudice you against them from the first. Whatever the count does or advises is wrong in your eyes, even what he does or advises for your own good."

"Pray, not a word more on that subject," said Paolo, making a great effort to control his feelings.

"Yes, whatever he does or advises is sure to meet with strenuous opposition from you," persisted the young lady.

"And with the most entire approbation from you," rejoined the young man. "Am I to shut my eyes, and declare what is mediocre, beautiful — extol copies, as

originals, and that, too, solely on the strength of a count's recommendation? I defy any one not purblind," continued Paolo, striding angrily towards the unlucky pictures, and pointing to them in succession — "I defy any one to say that that distorted arm could ever have been designed by Lionello, or that the colouring of that Madonna has the very least resemblance to Del Credi's colouring. As to those Canaletti, a pupil of six months' standing at San Luca would at a glance pronounce them spurious. I say again there never was a more bare-faced attempt at imposition."

"Are you aware that in saying so you impeach the character of a most respectable nobleman?" flashed out Miss Lavinia.

Paolo heard in these words the confirmation of his long-combated misgivings as to a certain foible of Lavinia's for titles, a foible the young democrat abhorred and recoiled from; hereupon, he entirely lost his temper. "Eh! dear me!" broke forth the young savage, in a passion; "to hear you, one would think this count was the fourth person of the Holy Trinity. What *do* you, what *can* you know, of this man and his respectability? No more than of the man in the moon. An utter stranger introduced to you by another utter stranger, casually met at a *table d'hôte*, that is all you have to found your opinion upon; unless you take it for granted that all sorts of goodness and worth are implied by the fact of being or styling oneself a count."

"Ah! indeed," said Miss Jones, with an adorably saucy toss of her head: "Will you be so good as to spare me a repetition of your tirades against all who are noble by birth? I know everything you have to say on that subject by heart."

"If you know everything by heart," began Paolo, and the deep colour in his cheek and the sparkle in his eye gave warning of some thundering retort; but at this critical moment the entrance of Miss Lavinia's maid obliged him to choke back his angry words. Miss Jones was wanted in the drawing-room.

"What a bore!" groaned Miss Lavinia. "Don't go away till I come back;" and with this injunction she once more left the Italian to his thoughts.

Paolo was wounded to the quick, less by the contradiction he had met with than by the manner in which it had been offered. Hitherto so gentle, and kind, and forbearing, how was it that on a sudden Lavinia stood before him, bitter, imperious, and harsh? For the first time he perceived a tone in her voice, a look in her eyes, an expression in her face, of which he could never have surmised the possible existence under her former tones and looks.

"How fiercely she stood up in defence of her dear humbug of a count!" thought he, striding up and down the narrow limits of the young lady's studio. "Between his opinion and mine, she did not hesitate for an instant. Well, let her trust in him, and believe in his wonders. What was the use of sending for me, since she had made up her mind already? To admire her purchase, I suppose. I begin to suspect Thornton is right after all. So long as you humour their whims, these proud islanders welcome you; dare to differ from them, and they throw you over without ceremony. I wonder how long she means to leave me here keeping guard on her treasures." Paolo took another turn, sat down, got up again, lost patience at last; and by the same way he had come in, made his exit.

Before proceeding further, we have two points to elucidate. The first is, that whatever might be Paolo's objections to aristocracy as an institution (the reader must not forget that he was a warm admirer of the Gracchi), he was too much a man of his time, and had intimately associated with too many fine fellows bearing handles to their names, to share in the prejudice of his father and grandfather, against individual nobles. The little respect he entertained for Count Fortiguerra rested on quite other grounds than the fact of his being a count.

The second point we wish to clear up is in justice to Miss Lavinia. Let us then state at once that Paolo's opposition about the pictures, for the possession of which she had struggled with all the ardour and entireness of her nature, would not have put to flight her equanimity as it had done, but that at the moment she had had other and serious causes of vexation and provocation.

Miss Lavinia had got up that morning in the best of humours, and when, at breakfast, her aunt handed her a note containing an invitation to Prince Torlonia's first ball on the following Saturday, the best of humours had progressed into the highest spirits. In this happy frame of mind she had written her line and a half to Paolo, and given orders for his admission to her studio. Her greeting, though hasty (Admiral Blackett and his daughters were calling at the time, and she had to run away to them), had been cordial and gracious. So far all well; but in the short space of time between her first and second appearance in the studio, tidings had reached her, considerably ruffling the smooth surface of her morning mood. Now for some explanation of the occasion and nature of these tidings.

Miss Lavinia, in passing through Paris four months previously, had had some dresses made by that famous French artist of European celebrity, Madame Lamy Housset, of the Rue de la Paix. It does an author's heart good to pen such names. Let the uninitiated be informed that out of the pale of Madame Lamy Housset there is no possible salvation for an English lady. At least Miss Jones and some others thought so, though there was a lively opposition in favour of Madame Zenobia — no, Palmyra — the association of ideas mislead me — and the Palmyrites turned up their noses very high at the Lamy Houssetites. This is a digression made with the best intentions. Well, then, Miss Jones was so enchanted with the dresses furnished by Madame Lamy that she determined to order some more for the winter season to be sent to Florence, Hôtel Hartmann, where the Joneses intended to stay till the end of October at least, when, owing to an unaccountable whim of Mr. Jones, the family left Florence so precipitately, that theirs was more like a flight than a departure. Miss Jones did not forget her dresses, but left the most minute directions with M. and Madame Hartmann about the expected box from Paris, desiring that it should be immediately sent to her at Rome, addressed to the care of the British Consul there. Full six weeks having elapsed, and there being no box forthcoming, Lavinia wrote to Madame Lamy Housset, to demand an explanation of the delay. Madame Lamy Housset politely answered by return of post, that, according to Miss Jones's orders, the dresses had been duly forwarded to Florence four weeks back, but all search there for Miss Jones having proved fruitless, the box had been sent back to Paris, and had just reached her (Madame L.

H.). Was Madame L. H. to send it to Rome or elsewhere?

I leave it to the public to imagine what were, what must have been, Miss Jones's feelings on reading this letter — the identical one we saw her clench and crush, while speaking to her lover. I am sure that all my fair readers will say as I do — and I do say it in the greatest earnest — that such a *contre-temps* was enough to provoke a saint, and just on the eve, too, of a ball at Torlonia's! It was while suffering under the first smart of this horrible intelligence, that Lavinia returned to Paolo, and, the magazine being full of powder, one stray spark, and it exploded.

Here arises a question. Would the explosion have taken place, had the untoward accident just related been made known to Miss Jones a fortnight back — that is, before Paolo made his declaration? All things considered, we must decide in the negative. During the period of what we may call Paolo's courtship, Miss Lavinia had not been without her share of crosses — who is? — and may have visited them, for aught we know, on her maid, or milliner, or the black steed which had the honour of carrying her, but they had nevertheless never clouded her intercourse with Paolo. To him, with one exception or two, and then in retaliation of real or imaginary offence given by him — to him she had invariably shown the same smooth brow, the same smiling face, the same amiable temper.

The fact is that, apart from the somewhat romantic and exciting circumstances under which she had made his acquaintance, and secured his services, apart even from the dazzle of his talent, Lavinia's fancy had been stirred into unusual animation by Paolo's odd ways of

thinking and acting, by his touchy independence, by his occasional impetuous outbursts *d'enfant terrible*. One and all of these gave him the charm of a novelty and rarity, and inspired her with the wish to please him. She had accordingly done what Thornton protested all young people do, when they have this wish to please one another — she had *posed* a little, that is, exhibited to Paolo only the sunny side of her nature.

A practice which, far from condemning, we would highly recommend, especially to married people, as nothing is more meritorious and conducive to harmony and happiness, than a constant habit of keeping one's disagreeableness in a misty back-ground, and concentrating the light of one's agreeableness on those one loves. How many households would be more peaceable and comfortable than they are, had man and wife retained their courtship attire, instead of showing themselves in the *déshabille* of dressing-gown and slippers!

To return: Paolo's declaration, like a stone thrown on the smooth surface of a lake, had somewhat altered the limpidity of Miss Jones's disposition. The conflict of feelings which it had aroused, the magnanimous resolution it had in a measure forced upon her, worked a material change in our heroine; for one thing, it set Paolo before her in quite a new light. He had too little hold on her to be accepted without reservation, too much to be discarded altogether. She looked down on him from all the height of her sacrifice, esteeming him immeasurably her debtor; the very task she had assumed, of educating him up to her own level, added not a little to the sense of her superiority, and to that of his obligations. Then, the young man's ecstatic contemplation of her, his discreet and submissive ways,

so different to what she had anticipated under the circumstances, while really touching her heart, nevertheless inspired her with a boundless confidence in her own power over him. This perfect security, and the new point of view from which she saw Paolo, brought about an unavoidable result. Whatever Paolo had won in one respect he had certainly lost in another.

We don't in general care extremely about much adorning of ourselves for people we have laid under great obligations, and on whose dutiful observance we can rely *quand même*. Miss Lavinia relaxed insensibly — without the least premeditation, of course — from that constant watch over herself, which had rendered her former intercourse with Paolo so even and agreeable, until this fine day, happening to be “out of sorts,” she gave way under middling provocation, and showed herself to be “out of sorts.”

Great was Miss Lavinia's surprise, and even alarm, when on her return presently to the atelier, making sure of finding Paolo where she had left him, she discovered the lair empty, and the wild cub gone; gone, no doubt, in anger; gone, perhaps, not to come again. It would only be what she deserved if he never did come back. A revulsion of feeling occurred. How had she dared to treat him so shamefully, after all the gentleness and delicacy he had shown, after all the obligations he had conferred on her! Was she not aware of how sensitive he was, how keenly alive to any slight from those he loved!

There is nothing like the fear of losing that, for which, in truth, we care but moderately, for enhancing its value and leading us to the retrospective discovery of how fond we were of it, though without our know-

ledge. Were it only a tame squirrel, the favourite of an hour, the moment it yields to its instincts, and seeks its former wild haunts, alas! alas! what a charming little creature it was! what a pet! how we loved it! And then the fuss we make, and the trouble we take to restore the dear runaway to its cage. Alas! alas! indeed.

There was a something considerably like this taking place in Miss Lavinia. The simple fact of Paolo's disappearance at once brought out all his excellences in strong relief, and threw his short-comings into the shade. Shame, repentance, and a grain of remorse dashed away all her late selfconceit, and notions of superiority. To the security in which she had basked of late, succeeded, as if by magic, the most poignant disquietude, lest he should be lost to her for ever. Acting upon the impulse given by the moment's feeling, the passionate and wilful girl had no rest, until she was seated in the carriage, her aunt by her side, and driving to Via Frattina.

Paolo was sitting astride a chair with both his elbows leaning on its highest rail, in the attitude we have already twice seen him in; the one, probably, into which he naturally fell when disturbed in his mind. He was in his shirt-sleeves — he felt hot, poor fellow! though a sharp wind was blowing — and seemed quite absorbed in watching the blue curls of smoke issuing from his mouth. A poor smoker at all times, Paolo had not placed a cigar between his lips since the day he had first called at Palazzo Morlacchi; and Lavinia knew this circumstance. Altogether, he had, at this present juncture, a devil-may-care appearance about him, which had little promise of good in it. At sight

of his unexpected visitors, Paolo started up with such impetuosity that he knocked over his chair, let the cigar drop to the ground, made a dash at his coat, and, as red as a burning coal (we don't know whether more from confusion, pleasure, or pain), muttered some hasty words of apology.

"It is we who ought to apologize," said Miss Jones; "I am come to sue for peace."

"For peace!" repeated Paolo; "to sue for peace, one must be first at war. I cannot conceive any such state between us; at least, not war existing on my side."

"Thank you," said Lavinia, "that sounds very kind and generous, if sincere," and checking herself, she added quickly, "and coming from you it must be sincere. However, you shall not prevent my making amends." He would have spoken, but she left him no time. "Yes, yes; I have been very provoking, foolish, opinionated, and rude."

"Oh! pray do not say another word," entreated Paolo.

"Well; say then that you forgive me."

"Indeed, I do with all my heart."

"Without mental reservation?" urged Miss Lavinia.

"Quite, quite, I assure you," eagerly affirmed the young man.

"No particle of resentment, not the tiniest, lurking anywhere?"

"Not the smallest atom."

"You are sure?" she went on insisting.

"Perfectly sure; I wish I knew how to convince you."

"Grant me a favour, and then I shall feel sure."

"Name it," said Paolo.

"Ah! but promise first that you will grant it."

"I have an objection to promising first," returned Paolo; "however, I will break through all rules this once; tell me your wish and it shall be done."

"That is really kind," burst out Lavinia, in happy triumph. "We are going to Torlonia's ball next Saturday; you can easily get a ticket, I know: come and join us there, will you?"

"If you insist on it, yes," said Paolo, with a shade of annoyance in tone and look; "but —"

"No 'buts,'" interrupted Lavinia; "I do insist, and I do so wish it. I want you to do the honours of your beautiful fresco."

"You know it already very well," said he.

"Never mind, I have never seen it with you, and that is what I long for."

"I shall feel myself so out of place at a ball," he pleaded; "I have never been at one; it is a sort of thing for which I have no fitness."

"How do you know that, if you have never been to one?" inquired the girl.

"Instinct often warns us of what will disagree with us," replied Paolo.

"Do it, then, as a sacrifice for my sake; do it for the pleasure your being there will give me."

Against a request like this, expressed in the tone of voice in which it was expressed, accompanied by the look with which it was accompanied (one of Lavinia's *irresistible* looks), Paolo was without defence of any kind, and surrendered at discretion. A defeat which the conqueror immediately acknowledged and rewarded,

by placing in the hand of the conquered the whitest, smallest, and softest of hands conceivable. This done, the visitors withdrew, the aunt rather at a loss to understand what was the importance of the interview she had witnessed, the niece in high glee at having killed two birds with one stone — namely, restored the fugitive squirrel to his cage, and improved the occasion for teaching him a new trick or two.

Paolo, as in duty bound, spent the rest of the day in calling himself a brute for his unmannerly flight from the studio — in restoring to Miss Jones her former character of angel — in lamenting his own fate in having to go to a ball — and in thanking Heaven that she would have him go. “For,” argued Paolo, “if she did not care for me, what would it matter to her whether I was there or not?”

When, a day or two after, Paolo told Thornton that he was going to Torlonia’s ball — he had secured a ticket by that time — Thornton made no objection; on the contrary, approved of it.

“Since nothing can open your eyes but sad experience,” said the misanthrope, “no better opportunity than this for a beginning. A few hours spent with Miss Jones at a ball will give you more insight into her character than ten years of morning visits. There’s nothing like a ball for showing female character; it draws the whole woman out. And then it is time you should get acquainted with your rival.”

“My rival?” exclaimed the young man.

“Yes; with that terrible rival, who is everywhere and nowhere, who can goad you to madness, and yet cannot be called to account — the world.”

CHAPTER XX.

Paolo sees a Ghost.

PAOLO arrived early at the ball. Shy people, from their invincible repugnance to making their entrance under the fire of many eyes, are, as a rule, among the earliest arrivals at all assemblies. No wonder, then, at Paolo's being among Torlonia's first guests. He was too much of an artist not to be pleasantly struck by what was to him the novel and fairy-like *coup-d'œil* of the long suite of reception rooms — by their noble proportions, the richness and variety of their decorations, the floods of light from chandeliers of exquisite Venetian workmanship, the profusion of flowers and shrubs on all sides, with fountains refreshing to every sense, playing amid those mimic *parterres* and groves. His soul, too, was stirred by the occasional strains of inspiring music, for the nonce a vain appeal to absent dancers. These combined influences, one and all, made his sensations for a time those of keen and unmixed enjoyment.

This pleasant state, however, did not last long. Unpalatable sights, such as are unavoidably met with in a large assembly at Rome, foreign uniforms, political opponents, political turncoats, Brutuses of yesterday turned into cardinal's courtiers of to-day, depressed his feelings, and roused his bile. "Well," thought he, to comfort himself, as a rebellious sigh would have its way, "I am not here for my own pleasure, but for hers;" and having nothing better to do, he went and made one of a large group of persons, standing in two compact rows in what he now perceived to be the principal entrance hall.

The fashionable crowd of which he formed one was composed almost exclusively of young men, most of them apparently foreigners to Italy; at least, not speaking her language, but French or English. The young Roman stood wondering what great personage was creating this expectation, when all conversation was hushed, and a general stir took place. Those who were before went further forward, those behind rose on the tips of their toes, stretched out their necks, and the short-sighted — astonishing the number of them — put up their eye-glasses, and in stepped in succession, first a stately lady with a lovely girl on each arm; then an elderly, plump dame, and a withered old one, followed by two more young fresh girls; the rear brought up by a couple between two ages; and the whole of them, young, middle-aged, and old, making a greater display of natural charms than, according to Paolo's primitive notions, was consistent with good taste. Now Paolo understood what sort of attraction it was that kept that double living wall at the entrance hall, when he heard comments, bad enough when disparaging, worse still when laudatory — comments which made him blush to the roots of his hair for those poor unconscious ladies. He hastened away, sat himself down in a corner, and fell to musing.

Little by little the rooms began to fill — the double human stream that roamed to and fro in opposite directions grew thicker, and the renewed strains of the orchestra, together with the measured beat of feet in the distance, announced that the ball had begun in earnest. Still Paolo sat musing. A slight tap of a fan awoke him, so to say; he turned round, and there before him was Miss Jones, more beautiful than

ever he had seen her, bare-shouldered, bare-armed, dazzling.

"Am I not very good to come and rouse you from your brown study? what are you thinking of?"

"Of nothing that you will care to hear," said Paolo, exchanging salutations with Mrs. Jones.

"But I do care," went on the radiant fairy; "I insist on knowing."

"I was thinking," replied Paolo, "on the beautiful moon, that is now shining without these walls."

"Were you? is there a moon to-night?"

"It was not probable you should notice it," observed Paolo.

"I did not, that's the truth."

"Does the idea of a ball abolish the rest of creation?" asked Paolo.

"Now, don't be moody and disagreeable," said the lady.

"Moody at a ball? who ever heard of such a thing? I am not such a fool," replied Paolo; "no, indeed, I intend to put on my best smiles and go and pay my homage to their eminences — I saw three somewhere."

"Nonsense! come and join us soon," and the obstruction which had brought Miss Jones to a standstill close to Paolo being removed, she disappeared with her aunt into the next room.

Miss Jones had yielded to an impulse of good-nature, in thus accosting young Mancini, for which, of course, she was afterwards called to account by Mr. Jones. It did her honour, though true it is, she had had only to stretch out her beautiful arm to reach him with her fan — only to lean over the back of one

intervening chair, to be able to converse with him. She felt grateful for his being there, grateful for his wearing "straw-coloured" gloves, and rather grateful to him for his good looks. He, on his side, was far from insensible to either her kindliness or her beauty, and would assuredly have shown how warmly he felt both, but for a certain crotchet of his, which, whenever called into action, sent gentler feelings to the rightabout.

Miss Lavinia naturally wore a ball-dress, an ultra ball-dress — every one knows what that means — and Paolo, we are ashamed of him, and for him, had a special pet prejudice against low dresses, and plenty of trash ready in support of this prejudice. Now, the secret is revealed of all his shiftings and evasions, as to painting the young lady in a certain garb, and of his strangely reserved manner towards her on the day he was one of the Joneses' dinner-party. The reader is entreated to bear in mind that we describe the feelings of a young savage. Paolo was utterly ignorant of the world and its ways; Paolo had never moved in the so-called upper circles; Paolo knew not that the higher you go in the social scale, the greater this sort of exhibition. Covering their shoulders is all very well for common people, for the wives and daughters of mechanics. This ignorance, and a strong disposition to jealousy, are the only excuses which we venture to offer in extenuation of this preposterous notion of his.

Paolo's mind was troubled "like a fountain stirred, and he himself saw not the bottom of it." He felt sorely out of his place, and if Miss Jones had not expressed the desire to be shown his fresco by himself,

ten to one but he would have gone home and to bed. As it was, he wandered away in search of her, and at last found the young lady in a room, metamorphosed into a grove, and fancifully lighted by coloured lamps hanging from the branches of the trees. There was a crowd in this room, and it was suffocatingly hot. Miss Jones was dancing a quadrille, and Paolo, obliged to remain in the rear, saw only as much as the spectators in front of him would allow. No doubt of Lavinia being in her natural element — her happy smile, her lustrous eyes, her beaming countenance, told a tale of keen and intense enjoyment. Her partner, a thin, light-haired young man, with an order on his breast, whether still or in motion, never slackened in his talk, and was most complacently listened to. Now and then some of his remarks produced a fit of half-suppressed laughter, as if she greatly enjoyed the joke, whatever it was. Paolo did not relish it half as much.

The lady who was the partner of Miss Jones's *vis-à-vis*, evidently divided with Lavinia the sceptre of queen of the ball, and the admiration of the public. But far from exciting any unkind feelings, this rivalry seemed to create a friendship, and to draw the beauties towards one another. Whenever the figure of the dance caused them to meet or join hands, there was no end to wreathed smiles, and becks, and gracious whispers — all of which was very pleasant to behold.

The appearance of this second lady was very remarkable. The character of her beauty, for beauty she had, was so strange and so dissimilar to that of the European type, that it required a practised connoisseur's eye to find it out, and even then some effort to acknowledge it; but once allowed, it exercised over you

what was very like magnetic fascination. She was small and plump, but most harmoniously proportioned, had jetty black hair — uncommonly large and round-shaped, jetty black eyes, with yellow streaks, and something of the feline phosphorescence in them — a nose a very little turned up, showing more of the rosy nostrils than a fastidious observer might have desired — a wide, well-shaped mouth, with an adorable dimple at each of its corners, brought into play at every moment by a winning smile, which served to exhibit a wonderful set of little teeth of dazzling whiteness. She wore a yellow dress with bouquets of black tulle, studded with emeralds, and in her raven hair, and on her violently displayed bosom, hung strings of oriental pearls, admirably assorting with and relieving her swarthy greenish complexion and the ink of her heavy tresses. Her style of dancing was as characteristic as her appearance. It had a *laissez aller*, with occasional starts of passion, in it, accompanied by *poses* of the head, wavings of the neck and arms, and undulations of the whole person, that might be found fault with, and declared out of place in a drawing-room; but which had all the softness, peculiarity, and attractiveness of the motions of a kitten. As to her ankles and feet — and thanks to the unfashionable shortness of her gown, every one had the benefit of them — they were unanimously pronounced unrivalled — the ankle and foot of a true Andalusian.

The quadrille did come to an end at last, and then Paolo made a desperate push to join Miss Jones; but before he had elbowed half his way to her, there was the yellow lady seated by her side, and a thick wall of gentlemen of all ages surrounding and conversing

with the two belles of the evening. Paolo, however, struggled on, so as to be near enough to avail himself of any opportunity that might offer, should Lavinia really wish for his services as cicerone. He doubted much that she remembered anything about his fresco. He looked in vain for either Mr. or Mrs. Jones, and then, naturally enough, his whole attention became concentrated on the group, of which Lavinia and the yellow lady were the admired centre. They held each other's hands, and seemed on such friendly and intimate terms, that Paolo could not but take it for granted that Pentesilea, or the cardinalessa — the yellow lady was no other than the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos — Paolo had identified her at a glance — well, Paolo could not but take it for granted, that she must be an old acquaintance of Miss Jones; and if so, why had Miss Jones withheld the fact from him? The marchioness was not the sort of woman with whom he would have desired that his English pupil should form an intimacy. Not that he gave more credence than such reports usually deserve to the stories current about her ladyship; but he objected to her eccentric ways, and her habits of self-exhibition. He knew also, from what Clelia and Salvator said, that, if kind and generous, the marchioness was, beyond all allowable limits, wilful, thoughtless, and childish.

While Paolo was lost in disagreeable speculations, the music struck up again, couples took their places, and the waltz began. This time Lavinia's partner was remarkably tall, handsome, prepossessing in appearance, and, as a dancer, quite a match for the young lady. It was really a pleasure to watch the two elegant forms flying rapidly round the room, with the ease and light-

ness of thistle-down driven by a gentle breeze — a pleasure, that is, to all but Paolo. To him, on the contrary, the sight was gall and wormwood. Probably many another in his situation, even though more scantily gifted than our Roman with originality, might object to seeing the woman he loves twirling round a room in the arms of a fine fellow, her cheeks so close to his cheeks that their breaths must mingle, a stray curl of her hair perhaps brushing his lips, not to mention other aggravating circumstances. But in this, as in all other matters, tastes differ, no doubt; and who will venture on the experiment of accounting for tastes? That of Paolo was, however, decidedly against this kind of sport; and had he had within his reach the inventor of the waltz, he would have made an example of him, for the guidance of other inventors. As it was, he had nothing for it but to fulminate curses — deep not loud — against him, as he stood with eyes riveted on the handsome pair, in mortal apprehension lest not only faces but lips might touch. One must be in love and jealous, to be pursued by any such ridiculous fears.

After the climax of the waltz, which in sight and sound resembles a humming-top, the music stopped, and Lavinia's cavalier reconducted her to a seat, thanked her, bowed low, and departed, and with him Paolo's incubus. He made a desperate rush forward and reached Miss Jones's side.

"Here you are at last," she said, panting for breath, and passing her cobweb handkerchief furtively over her face. "How very hot it is! shall I ever be cool again! Oh, my poor gloves, they are not fit to be seen."

"You had better not dance any more," said Paolo,

innocently, "but amuse yourself with walking through the rooms."

"Not dance any more!" exclaimed the beauty, loudly, and with a superb toss of her head. "Look," and she held up her tablets, "it is full; I am engaged for every dance."

Paolo involuntarily recoiled. The tones, gestures, looks were those of a person drunk — drunk with excitement. Her countenance reminded him of that of a Bacchante he had copied over and over again while he was at the drawing academy, and which had haunted him day and night at the time. He listened, struck dumb and torpid as one in a dream. The return of the yellow lady, and other strangers, who clustered round Miss Jones, roused him from his trance; he bowed and retired. In doing so, he met Mr. and Mrs. Jones coming in search of their niece. Mrs. Jones stopped him, asking if he were ill, he looked so pale.

"Nothing but the heat," answered Paolo.

The lady complained of heat likewise, and they parted.

"Poor fool that thou art!" thought Paolo to himself, as he elbowed his way out of the crowd, "she thinks no more of thee or thy fresco than of the first pair of shoes she ever wore. She thinks of dancing, and she is right. For what do people come to a ball if not for dancing? The greater ass to be here, I who do not dance. If ever —"

The thread of his thoughts or resolves was here violently snapped by a sharp touch on his shoulder. He turned, and found himself face to face with the so-styled Du Genre, his French friend and fellow painter.

"Ah, ah! you are humanizing yourself at last," said the Frenchman.

"Am I?" asked Paolo: "my opinion is that I am brutifying myself."

"Always caustic," observed Du Genre. "Eh bien! how goes it with the ideal?"

"Stifled under these mountains of matter."

"Farceur! it is a charming fête: what dresses! what women!"

"The dresses are faded, the women puppets, the fête a bedlam. I protest that any one who is pleased with what he sees here is either crazy, or a student of the nude."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Du Genre, "I see now where the shoe pinches, you puritan. You would have young ladies with beautiful transparent skins put them under lock and key."

"And where would be the harm, if they did?" returned Paolo. "Ought a woman of flesh and blood to be exhibited like a statue or a picture, that we may admire the delicacy of that curve, or the fine effect of that tint?"

"And the public, barbarian — the public — are they not to be considered?"

"Ah! the public," sneered Paolo. "Yes, you are right, — I forgot the claims of society. You have converted me. Good night." And he hurried away, repeating to himself, "In fact, why should the public not have their part? It is the public that awards the prizes, therefore it is but just and fair the public should have the means of judging. Fie on husbands and lovers. What right have they to confiscate the share of the public? Down with all such monopoly; little fear of

it, after all. As far as I can see, love seems to be a very accommodating affair. But mine is not. Mine is the love of a miser. I must have my treasure all to myself — down to the uttermost farthing. I am jealous of the very air surrounding her. Only to see her dance with another made me suffer martyrdom. Why am I thus? Why am I not like others? Am I wrong, or mad, or what? At all events, I have had enough of balls, and of yellow gloves, too," and so thinking, he tore them off, and sent what was now very unlike a pair of ball gloves, spinning along the marble hall.

CHAPTER XXI.

Thornton tells a Tale.

THE clocks of the Eternal City were tolling twelve as the heated young man issued into the street, and the slow strokes fell on the still night like a solemn warning. The moon was riding high in the unclouded sky, the air was cool and pleasant to fevered brows, the silence and solitude sweet to a swelling, overcharged heart. As Paolo walked along, his excitement insensibly subsided under the soothing influences of the hour, and dwindled into a profound discouragement, into one of those heavy, poignant, supreme depressions, not unfrequently the lot of passionate natures, and under the tyranny of which life seems an unbearable burden. In this dejected humour, he reached Via Babuino. A tall shadow was flitting to and fro before the house in which Paolo lived. It was Thornton.

"I knew you would not be late," said the Englishman, "and so I have been on the look out for you. Is

it the light of the moon which makes you look so pale, or have you seen a ghost?"

"The one and the other," returned Paolo; "but spare me just now."

"I am not the one to bruise the broken reed," muttered Thornton. "Paolo, I may have used the goad to make my friend turn from a precipice; but once he has taken the plunge, and lies wounded, I would handle him as tenderly as a babe. All affliction is sacred to me." Then Thornton added, in a lighter tone, "Come now to my room, and let us have a chat and a glass of punch."

"Thank you," said Paolo, "I am neither inclined to talk nor drink. I will go to bed."

"To toss about, and fret, and bite your pillows to stifle your groans. I have known such nights. No, Paolo; come with me; we shall not talk. Come, my son."

A father could not have said "my son" more tenderly. Every feature in the speaker's fine countenance was expressive of gentle and considerate sympathy. The young Roman, easily conquered, followed to his friend's apartment, and once in the familiar room, stretched himself out on a sofa, while Thornton, before a table on which was the ready prepared punch, applied a lighted match to the spirits, and stood there stirring and exciting the blue flames to greater and more wizard activity.

"An image of that short fever yclept life," said Thornton, gravely, as the last forked, fiery tongue, after much wavering, flickering, paling, at length died out.

"It might be so full and happy, though!" sighed Paolo.

"Full, — yes, to a certain extent, if we were wise," said the Englishman; "but happy, I much doubt. Happiness is less an affair of circumstances than of temperament. Many are happy with the best reasons for being quite the contrary, and *vice versâ*. There are in the world, luckily, but a very limited number to whom nature has forgotten to give the buffers and soothers with which the majority are provided to protect them against too rough collisions. Hence the disagreeable shocks this minority of ill-constituted mortals receive, where the others receive none, or perhaps even agreeable impressions. The former are like swimmers against the current, or like guests at a banquet whose stomachs are at fault with the viands before them. Such are never satisfied with an approximation, but like Balzac's Flemish alchymist, pursue that which they can never reach — the absolute, in politics, in morals, in art, in love, in everything. For such as these happiness is out of the question; quiet and peace they may enjoy, so long as they keep out of the paths of the world. This is thy lot and mine, my poor friend."

"I revolt against it, then!" cried Paolo; "I scorn your peace and quiet; I will and must be happy. A man worthy the name of a man ought not to mope and despond when he can act. I know what hurt me, and no later than to-day she shall hear it from me."

"Hear what, my poor boy? that her dancing with another drives Paolo Mancini frantic, and that therefore she must give it up? Even if she would, she could not. Her uncle and aunt, her friends, the world, would misconstrue the renunciation. Hear that her ball-dress

is objectionable in your eyes? If she would, she could not alter the style of it. It is the *costume de rigueur* on such occasions; or hear that you find fault with her looking pleased and excited at the admiration she inspires? Don't find fault with *her*; find fault with human nature, or rather with yourself. You cannot make her responsible for your peculiar manner of seeing and feeling."

"You lay your finger on each of my wounds," said Paolo, in surprise; "yon read my heart as if it were an open book."

"I once knew a young man who passed through similar phases, and who described his sensation to me," explained Mortimer. "Youth, fortune, good looks, a kindly disposition, great moderation of desires — he had all, you would have said, which ought by right to secure happiness. But he had none of those inestimable softeners which, as I said before, ward off through life all violent concussions or falls. The world disagreed with that youth, and he with the world. He was wise enough to turn his back upon it, and seek contentment in the solitude of a country life. Here he had a dream. He dreamt of a girl as lovely as the roses she tended in her garden, as true as the nature which encircled her, as ignorant of the world and its ways as if no such thing existed. Indeed, they did not as yet exist for her. Here I am safe, thought the imprudent, youthful sage; and he let his heart grow to her, let every hope and wish coil round her. The dream lasted for a twelvemonth. It vanished at a county ball — her first ball."

Mortimer, half choked with emotion, swallowed his

glass of punch almost at a gulp, and after a little he went on, —

“He saw her leaning on strangers’ arms, complacently listening to and smiling upon strangers, forgetful of everything, himself included, in the excitement of the moment. A young officer, the son of a nobleman, paid her particular attention, and to see the deference and eagerness with which she marked her sense of the honour, one would have said she had as much faith in the saving grace of the peerage as in that of the Bible. My friend felt as you felt not long ago. That terrible rival, from which he had thought himself secure with her, the world, on a sudden stood between him and her — nay, supplanted him. His whole moral being was shaken to its foundations. She did not notice his agitated looks; she had no eyes but for the admiration bestowed upon her. The young man thought to himself as you did at the ball — said as you did at the ball — said as you did just now, ‘This shall not be again; I will remonstrate with her.’ But when he tried to do this, she did not understand him, and asked, ‘What have I done?’ This question closed his mouth. In fact, what had she done but indulge in an amusement pronounced innocent by society, and as such entered into by most respectable ladies, both married and unmarried. What had she done, poor child, but acknowledge and be flattered by the condescension of one of those, the world, her world, recognizes as its betters? What right had he to visit on her unoffending head what, after all, was nothing but the sin of his own faulty organization? He felt ashamed of himself, and held his peace.”

Thornton drained his glass again, and then proceeded with increased animation, —

“A ball, like a misfortune, never comes alone. This one was to be followed by races, then dinners, and the inevitable complement of races and dinners — more dancing. Well, my young fool was fool enough to imagine that she might make him a sacrifice of this new ball, and he wrote accordingly. The answer was, that his request could not be complied with. She was engaged to go, and what would the world say if she did not? And go she did. He saw her go in with his own eyes. It is but fair to say, that the young lady was on a visit to an aunt, who doted on all kinds of gay crowds, doted also on those ornaments of county-town ball-rooms, officers — yes, the town had the blessing of a garrison. The aunt hated a quiet evening at home — she was born for society, she said. We fools call that species of woman worldly, but the wise, whose company she so sedulously grappled at, spoke of her as a pleasant, companionable woman.

“Well, was I to be laid on the rack again? Yes; I—” continued Mortimer, as Paolo suddenly sat bolt upright with amazement — “yes, it is the follies and sins of my own youth, that I am relating to you. Do what I would, I could no longer endure the boiling hell of my own feelings. I could no more change her nature than my own. I could spoil her life, as well as mine; that was all I could do. Better part. I wrote her a letter, a long letter. Every syllable that I penned drew blood from my heart. What I said, I don’t know; not a word in wrath, many in love, and humility, and self-accusation. I laid bare before her every

fold of my inner being, as fully and unreservedly as if I had been before my God. I entreated, implored her pardon, humbly and earnestly. This letter I sent to her from London. Ten days after that, I was in New York. I have never since set foot in England again."

"It was an extreme resolution to come to," observed Paolo. "And she, what did she say or do?"

"Of that I am ignorant. From that time to this, I have never heard of or from her. No one had my address but my solicitors, and I left instructions with them to communicate with me solely on business, and to destroy any letters that might be sent to them for me."

"That was hard — seems almost cruel. I am sure she wrote, and hoped on for long; how do you know but that your unrelenting silence broke her heart?"

"Don't say I broke her heart," burst forth Mortimer, with frightful vehemence; "don't say it, or you will drive me mad. Say that I was right; that what I did was best for her; that I could not have done otherwise; or, better still, say that women never break their hearts, so long as there exist such things as fashions, lordlings, and balls."

Mortimer shook from head to foot as he spoke, and his fine countenance grew haggard and livid.

Startled, nay, almost scared, by this passionate outburst of feeling, so unlike his friend's constant habit of self-control, which amounted in general to passiveness, Paolo remained silently watching Thornton, as he walked the room backwards and forwards, quiet enough now. The noble form grew gradually indistinct, until it completely vanished from eyes closed in slumber.

Paolo spent the best part of the following morning in meditating on the shape in which to clothe the strictures he intended to offer to Miss Lavinia, on the subject of balls, partners, &c. It was a difficult problem he had set himself — to find words exempt at the same time from vagueness, quite unmistakeable in meaning, and yet measured in so nice a balance that they could give no offence. But not for this was there any wavering in his resolves; and had there been, Mortimer's strange revelations would have supplied an additional spur. "God forbid," thought the young lover, "that by any fault of omission on my side, things should come to a like pass between her and me. I owe it to her, not less than to myself, to be candid and open." We don't know if he solved the problem to his satisfaction; certain it is, that his ability and industry were defeated by an unforeseen circumstance.

Mrs. Jones, who had gone to the ball feeling far from well, was suddenly taken ill on her return home. Her attack of asthma was so unusually violent, that every one near her apprehended immediate suffocation. Physicians were called in one after the other, and all the resources of science evoked, with, for a time, but little result. Towards morning, however, she was somewhat relieved, but, from the state of exhaustion, still considered in danger. Paolo was told this from the lips of Miss Lavinia herself, when he called at Palazzo Morlacchi, and, oh! with what agony of look, what wringing of hands, and floods of tears! How could he have lectured her at such a moment? besides, he had no time, for poor Lavinia was far too impatient to return to the side of the sick bed, to linger one unnecessary second with any one; and had she done

so, Paolo, to tell the truth, was far more likely to have fallen at her feet in a transport of pity and admiration, than to have sermonized her. The light in which he now saw her, banished for the time all disagreeable shades. A heart full of such an argosy of affection was the best security against any momentary flights of the head. An appeal to that heart was sure, at any time, to elicit all the good in it. So reasoned Paolo.

CHAPTER XXII.

Miss Lavinia's Diary.

"DEAR LADY AUGUSTA,

"Since my last, I have had a great terror, and a great joy, and to whom but you, dearest of friends, can I confide my joys and sorrows, with entire certainty of their being shared and sympathized with? The night before last, on our return from a ball at Torlonia's, aunt was taken ill, frightfully ill, threatened with suffocation: actually black in the face, and with scarcely any pulse. Oh! the horror of those hours! How is it that one's heart does not break with such suffering? Thank God — oh! thank God, I can now speak of it as past. Since yesterday, the improvement has been so rapid and steady, that the physicians themselves are surprised, and to-morrow, if the weather be fine, she is to be permitted to take a drive on the Pincio. I feel so light-hearted, so happy, that I can scarcely sit still to write. I feel a longing to get up, and dance by myself. What a child I am, after all!

"Now that the danger is over — yes, really over — I can remember what went before, and which, even

while it was being played out, I was thinking I should relate to you; it is so delightful to have some one that likes to hear all one has to tell about oneself. Well, but I am not going to write about the ball; no, you have had a surfeit of such things; but, about — about a charming conquest I have made. ‘Oh! the fickle monkey,’ I hear you say, wearing your gravest look; ‘a conquest after —’ Never fear; this victory will give umbrage to no one, for my conquest is only a — woman. But *such* a woman! dark as night, restless as quicksilver, passionate, like the thorough creole she is, fond of riding, driving, shooting, dancing, singing, and doing each to perfection; and such an adorable way of dressing into the bargain; in short, the very companion for me. She introduced herself — I ought to say declared her love at first sight, so warm and affectionate was the language of her introduction. She pronounced me a nonsuch of beauty, begged my friendship, brought half Rome, I believe, to my shrine, would only dance in the quadrille where I danced, and remained by my side till the end of the ball; in a word, there could not be a more ardent courtship from man to woman, than that of this fascinating woman to me; and I, also, have taken an immense fancy to her. I have told you everything I know of my beauty, except her name. Here it is: Juanita Florez Virginia, Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos. Hers is one of the oldest families in Cuba. Her husband, moreover, is a Grandee of Old Spain, and ambassador somewhere, and his younger brother, Conde de la Terra, *chaperons* her. She called on us the day after the ball, as she had promised, but aunt was at the worst, and I could only stay a few instants with her. Uncle was at home, and Count Fortiguerra with him.

Mr. Jones, I could see, was not sorry, and, sooth to say, no more was I, that the first person she met in our house, should be a nobleman. If her servants came once during that day to inquire for aunt, I am positive they came twenty times. She called herself again yesterday, and is to be here to-day. We are all to go and spend a day at Villa Torralba, where she resides, to get acquainted with one another, as the marchioness says. The marchioness! she won't hear of my giving her any title, but insists on my calling her Juanita. She is all impatience to show me her villa, her grounds, her horses, her theatre (it seems she has got one), and to have me quite to herself, that is her own expression.

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"Fully eleven days since I scribbled the above, and I have not had one spare hour, not a spare minute, to devote to my diary. No heroine of a fashionable novel in the height of the season was ever more beleaguered with engagements than I have been during these eleven days. Life is a race, indeed, under the leadership of this fiery creole. A whirlwind, a hurriance, are the only appropriate similes for her activity of mind and body. She can ride or drive for hours, pay a dozen visits, entertain some thirty guests at dinner, and dance till morning, without betraying the least fatigue, and without any flagging of her spirits. Her nerves must be what people call iron nerves. That she has an iron wrist, I for one can vouch, as any one can who has seen her driving her pair of wonderful ponies — regular little demons — or riding Achmet, her Arab, who is as fiery and untameable as herself. We rush along at the rate of a mail-train behind its time, and I own that I do occasionally find it a little too much. Her love for me

has become a sort of *furor*. Since I sang to her, Grisi, Alboni, and Jenny Lind, my lovely Spaniard says, are not worthy to unlatch my shoes. She will grant me neither peace nor truce, she protests, until I promise to sing in the opera which she means to give at her theatre. I do not think I shall comply; the idea of being on any stage and acting before an audience, however private the one and select the other, has something in it very repugnant to my feelings, and you know I am no prude. However we shall see. Señora Juanita, moreover, declares she cannot live without me, and it would seem so, for we are almost always together. We have had a morning concert, and dined twice at Villa Torralba. Aunt is so nearly well that she came to dinner, but drove home early in the evening. They dined with us on Monday. *They* stands for the marchioness and the Conde; and I leave it to your imagination to decide on what were the amount of Mr. Jones's exertions to secure the finest of fine people to meet them. Count Fortiguerra figured at the head of the list. By the by, Juanita has taken a great fancy to him. On Tuesday I went with her and uncle to Lady Hamilton's tea, on Wednesday to Princess Sgrozanoff's soirée dante, on Thursday to Marchesa Saffioli's conversazione, on Friday to an *Accademia d'Improvvisazione*, on Saturday to the ball at the French Embassy. I believe every foreigner or native of any note have been introduced to me. I am fast becoming the rage here, and no wonder, when my Juanita, who evidently gives or takes away one's right to be considered fashionable and one of the *beau monde*, does nothing but rave of my perfections to every creature she sees.

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"Another week gone — really, no time to breathe. But I must tell you about our races, or rather my races. You must know that from the first moment of our becoming acquainted, she thought of getting up some races in imitation of our English ones. She dotes on bull-fights, and would have managed to have had one a month ago, but, as she confided to me, the Pope dissuaded her; so, as I said, as soon as she knew me, she determined to have races *à l'Anglaise* in my honour; and they took place yesterday, and were the *bonne bouche* of all our gaieties. The place of rendezvous was the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and two hundred persons congregated there by special invitation; the number of those present non-invited was legion. Almost all of us were in red, we ladies in red jackets, and the men in red coats. The marchioness generally rides and drives in a red jacket, and I have had one made off her pattern, and it suits me uncommonly well. We had only gentlemen riders. There were twenty-one English, a Russian or two, and one Roman — not a Roman, I believe, but at all events an Italian — that very Prince of Rocca-Ginestra, whose turn-out I so much admired some time ago, and about whom Signor Mancini made such a fuss. The whole thing went off capitally, and but for the horses, poor specimens in general, one might have imagined oneself on an English raceground. There was the same eating, drinking, and flirting in the carriages, the same fire of small talk and wit, the same mountebanks striving for money; everything but the horses — oh, yes, and but the sky — was like a scene in our dear country. The greater number of the invited went afterwards to Villa Torralba, and then we danced, and supped, and danced again, till dawn of the

next morning. It was hard work for the queen of the fête, Lavinia Jones, for my royalty of an hour entailed presentations and compliments without end — such compliments! we English don't shine in that line: it was enough to have worn out the strongest Samson in petticoats. Among the most enthusiastic of my subjects were uncle and Count Fortiguerra, both unmistakeably tipsy.

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“A disagreeable complication. I had written so far yesterday, when my Spanish Will-o'-the-wisp came playing round me, and whisked me away to Villa Torralba. I stipulated for a quiet day, and a comparatively quiet day we had — a drive of two hours, and an hour's practising in the shooting-gallery. *Nota Bene* — I am fast becoming an excellent pistol-shot. The rest of the day was spent indoors, most of it in the theatre. A diminutive young man, all in black like a doctor or clergyman, and a strikingly handsome girl, were superintending the rehearsal of the choruses. The girl, called Clelia, and only a dressmaker, went through her task with a calm dignity which might have suited an empress; the small man in black, on the contrary, did his part with a zest and a funny *bonhomie*, which sent every one present, even the queenly girl herself, into fits of laughter. He is a scene-painter of tolerable repute, and Clelia is his affianced bride. I have never mentioned my rivals in the marchioness's love — her dogs. She has some of every kind in the world, I believe, and attends to them just as if they were babies; gets frightened at their least indisposition; in short, pets them more than any reasonable woman would or should do. One of these favourites was ailing, and so away

went the marchioness every five minutes to visit the interesting patient. I don't know what possessed me, but during one of these absences, I asked the droll little painter if he knew Signor Mancini. '*Altro!* Signor Mancini was like a brother to him,' was the answer, his eyes and those of his handsome companion brightening marvellously at the sound of the name; and hereupon followed a glowing panegyric of Signor Paolo, as artist, friend, and man. Clelia added her warm assent to every word. Juanita, happening to return while the little man was still declaiming on this subject, with her usual inquisitiveness insisted on being told how I came to know Signor Paolo, what he was like, what was his profession, &c. &c. And I, yielding, I hope, less to the promptings of *amour-propre* than to a wish to do Signor Paolo a service by interesting a person of the marchioness's rank and wealth in his behalf, told her how kindly he had directed me in my painting, and also — here is what I think was perhaps unwise — of the portrait he had taken of me, and which was all but finished. No sooner had I said this, than impetuous Juanita declared she must and would see my picture at once, and that she would have her own taken; and was for setting off immediately to have her first sitting. You may imagine my dismay, knowing Signor Mancini's ways so well. It was all I could do to persuade her to delay her visit to the studio in Via Frattina, by making her remember the hour of the day, and how much too late it would be by the time we reached Rome. So, at last, she gave up the point, and the visit is to take place to-day.

"The truth is, I wanted a little time to consider whether I had not better write and prepare him for

this call, and urge him to comply with the marchioness's request, or whether I would trust to the chapter of accidents. Upon reflection, I think this will be my best course. Signor Paolo is very shy, and at this moment I have more reliance on his shyness than on his goodwill. The great point is to get at him, and if he were forewarned, he is just the man to shut himself up in that atelier of his, and be stone deaf to bell and knocker. You wonder at *my* having any such anticipation, don't you? Ah! but Signor Paolo is angry with me, and not quite without cause. I will not pretend not to be aware that I have treated him rather cavalierly; at least, apparently so, during my last gaieties. He called twice — once in the morning, just as I was going to a concert at Villa Torralba, and again one evening, at the very moment I was getting into the carriage to go to a ball. Of course, he looked disappointed and vexed. The worst of the business is, that on both occasions, wishing to console him, I made an appointment for a sitting on the morrow, and I *was* very naughty — I kept neither. He has never been near me since. The last time I saw him was the day of the races; it was in the Corso, and I was in the marchioness's barouche, dressed in my red jacket. I caught his eye, and felt that I coloured; I am sure I don't know why, for, after all, there is no sin in wearing scarlet — red shawls are common enough; however, he looked as black as thunder as he turned away.

* * * * *

“What an inexplicable riddle the human heart is! we cannot even read and understand our own; for, do we not often, under some of its momentary impulses, feel, act, speak, in a way, which, had it been pro-

phesied to us but an hour before, we should have laughed at, and spurned the notion of with indignation? I remember hearing an author of some fame one day decline all compliments about his books, affirming that not he, but a *homunculus* within him, had written them, always without his knowledge, not unfrequently against his will. I suppose I have some such sort of an imp, a *fæminula*, for whose sayings and doings I, the woman, am not responsible. What is all this preamble to lead to? you ask. To preparing you, my dear, for something very extraordinary. But I must begin at the beginning.

We went yesterday, Juanita and I, as we had agreed, to Signor Mancini's studio. He was there, not, as usual, painting, but writing. I have no words to tell you how his altered appearance shocked me; ghastly pale, with sunken cheeks, blood-shot eyes, he was the mere shadow of his former self. 'Would he be so kind,' I asked, 'as to allow my friend, the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos, to see my portrait?' and glancing round, to see where it was, fancy my surprise at discovering that all the easels were vacant, and what appeared to be a roll of canvas in a corner of the room. A flush spread over his face as he stammered out that my portrait had met with an accident, had fallen, in fact, and been so injured that he had sent it to have the canvas repaired. I saw perfectly well that he was telling a fib, but why? I observed aloud, while I silently wondered what had really become of my picture, that I particularly regretted the circumstance, as my friend, had she been satisfied with my likeness, as I was certain she would have been, had determined to ask him to take one of her, if his occupation — I was

going to add, would permit, but he gave me no time, saying hurriedly, that being on the eve of leaving Rome for change of air, he could make no engagements of any sort for the present. This was principally addressed to the marchioness, for he avoided looking at me as much as he decently could. I here remarked, that I hoped he was not going farther than Tivoli, or Frascati. 'Exactly,' answered he; 'to Tivoli, or Frascati, or — I have not made up my mind as to where yet.' 'Not to be away long?' I hoped. 'Oh, no! not long; for a little while.' Again I felt sure that he was deceiving me, and a mortal uneasiness lest he should be going away for ever stole over me. All at once I felt what it would be to me if I lost him. I had been a wretched fool, a wicked fool. I had neglected him, the best, the truest, the most devoted, because — I can't write it, it is too mean. My whole soul was clinging to him with the energy of despair, and yet, there I must stand, and chatter words of course. I did love him, yes, I did; and he was leaving me! I followed the marchioness downstairs with some wild idea of telling her everything and going back to him. I had actually reached the carriage, but it would not do. I told her I had dropped one of my bracelets, and, without waiting for any answer, I rushed up the stairs again into the studio. He had been pacing the room, and had his back to the door as I lifted the latch. When he saw me, he stood transfixed. I went up to him, and said, —

"I have but a minute; what have you done with my picture?"

"Tore it to pieces with my own hands."

"And where are you going?"

"To Paris."

"When do you start?"

"This evening at eight o'clock."

"You shall not go."

"I shall, and will."

"If you are a man, you will not desert — those who love you."

"Who loves me?"

"I do; yes, with all my heart. Will you go or stay?"

"He hesitated a second, then said, —

"I stay."

"I held out my hand; he fell at my feet, pressed it to his heart — to his lips — and then I ran away.

"And now to explain my preamble, and I have done. I suppose it to be in human nature, that the value we set on anything increases with the chances of its being lost, and diminishes with those of its being restored to us. What is very certain is, that yesterday I thought in the heat of pursuit no sacrifice too great to save me from a threatened loss, and to-day — shall I say it or not? — to-day, after four and twenty hours of security, I look back upon the price I paid for my possession, not exactly with regret, but with a wonder that is very akin to regret. Who can fathom this mystery for me? who explain this contradiction? Is it but the momentary reaction which follows a fit of fever, or am I influenced, unknown to myself, by the bitter remarks of the marchioness, who took quite an aversion to him? I know it is one of my faults to attach an undue weight to the opinion of others. I must try and correct myself of this; it will otherwise prove a bar to any steadiness of purpose.

"I have made another observation as to myself and Signor Paolo, one which greatly puzzles me. His power over me is great; too great when he is present, too little when out of sight. I really believe he magnetizes me. Laugh if you like, but I do think so. I am full of other fancies and misgivings; he has lately grown so unmanageable; it is true I have given him cause of offence. I neglected, indeed, slighted him. I will be on my good behaviour for the future. It is partly his fault also. Why can't he go into society, and dance, and do like the rest of the world? then we should meet oftener, and he would be better satisfied, and so should I. Ah, me! I feel thunder in the air; the storm will burst when he hears that I am going to be one of the performers in the marchioness's theatricals, and, worse still, that I am to sing with his *bête noire*, the Prince of Rocca Ginestra. The marchioness, supported by uncle and even aunt, pressed me so hard on that unlucky day of the races, that they wrenched from me a promise — an unwilling promise, I declare. To draw back now is perfectly out of the question. What reason could I give, as I dare not give the real ones? I must trust a good deal to lucky chances, and a little to dissimulation. I begin to wish I had never come to Rome; he is *capable* of killing me, he is indeed. A famous *dénoûment* for a novel. Few men in real life love enough for the attempt. You will abuse me for being romantic, but there is something flattering in being loved so ferociously."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Stormy Truce.

THE *entente cordiale* which followed the treaty of peace concluded between Paolo and Miss Jones was, as may be easily foreseen, but of short duration. As but too often happens in treaties involving far greater interests, and most carefully worded, each of our contracting powers had a particular *bonâ fide* interpretation of their tacit agreement, at perfect variance and clashing with the interpretation of the other. Rare it is, indeed, that, under such circumstances, what was to cement peace should not beget war. At any rate, it was a consequence which did not fail on the present occasion. Let us, for the sake of a clear understanding of the *casus belli*, define, as concisely as possible, the two conflicting versions of the treaty, and the rival pretensions to which it gave birth.

To make amends to Signor Paolo for her late neglect, and to regulate her behaviour towards him for the future, so as not to afford him a pretext for any complaint of want of proper attention on her part; such and no other was to be, would Miss Jones have explained, had she been called on to do so, the practical and tangible result of her impetuous seeking after a reconciliation. Therefore, as long as she allowed of his visits at her own house, which she conscientiously did on certain fixed days and hours, and showed him a friendly and smiling countenance, Lavinia believed herself, with the best faith, to be within the letter and spirit of her compact. Of altering her general mode of life in what it might displease him, she had never dreamed, and could

not dream, ignorant as she was as to how that fashion of life offended him.

But far wider and more comprehensive was Signor Paolo's view of their convention. His construction of it was, that Miss Jones, by suing for peace, had naturally engaged herself to satisfy *all* the exigencies — reasonable in his eyes — of an accepted suitor, and a non-compliance with which had been the cause of the rupture between them; for, argued Paolo, if she loves me — and love me she does, or she would certainly not have said that she did — if she loves me, then it must be a real pleasure for her to humour me in notions, which, after all, go far to prove the depth and exclusiveness of my love. My ways may seem peculiar to her; but she knew them, and if, knowing them, she nevertheless sought me, what could she mean but that she takes me such as I am, good, bad, or indifferent?

As the reader sees, Paolo was a long way off from his lyrical rhapsodies and ecstatic feelings of a few weeks ago, when to kiss the spot hallowed by the soles of her feet had sufficed to content him. He was less discreet now, less trustful; but at that period she was a goddess, at this, only a woman. How so? That great wizard, suffering, had brought about the transformation. Through sleepless nights with racking brain, through mad longings for death, and curses on his aching heart, a knowledge of reality had grown fast, and enlightened even dreamy Paolo; and he came forth from the fiery ordeal with bruised body and soul, minus the freshest leaf of his garland of illusions, plus a shred from experience, that hypocrite whose real name is distrust.

The interrupted drawing lessons were then resumed

twice a week, but the drawing-master had little joy of them. Miss Jones, in the full conviction that she was fulfilling every duty towards Paolo, pursued with a light heart her course of gaiety; nay, as every day was marked by a new acquaintance, she fluttered more wildly from one dissipation to another. She was never even conscious of the interruptions and curtailments of the time destined for Paolo. Scarcely had he ever her undivided attention; it was either a visitor in the drawing-room, whom she must run and see, or the dress-maker, or the singing-master, or a note to answer. Ah! these notes — these scented, varicoloured, fantastically folded notes — how abhorrent they were to Paolo: they proved the bane of his life. Innocent as most of them were of any meaning — those which had some conveying no more interesting intelligence than the address of a milliner, the lines quoted at last night's ball from Tennyson, or the introducing a sonata or song to the belle of the moment; poetry and music alike fated to remain unread, unplayed, unsung, from the want of time — innocent, we say, as these notes were, they had each and all a perfume of love about them which furiously irritated the nerves of the young Roman.

Worse still when master and pupil had a quiet hour, and Lavinia told how her time had been taken up in the interval between one lesson and the other, and expatiated on the topics filling her thoughts — the ball that had been, and the one that was to be, at which H. M. Lewis of Bavaria was expected to be present; her dress, and the notice and admiration it excited; the marked attention paid her by his Grace, or his Excellency, and so on. She did not perceive, nor care to perceive, what gall and worm-wood all this was to

Paolo. Once entered on the chapter of gratified vanity, the cleverest and kindest-hearted of girls can prove herself blind and cruel. No wonder that to Paolo, one of the uninitiated, such a life of self-exhibition as was here detailed to him, such a reckless pursuit of excitement, such utter dethronement of the spiritual part of our nature, should seem something empty, frivolous, absurd; more suited to a peacock, whose business is the display of its tail, than to a rational, responsible creature, endowed with heart and mind, and an immortal soul.

And Paolo said this one day, said it plainly and bluntly. The young lady winced greatly, and accused him of grudging her the natural amusements of her age. Not at all, affirmed the lover; he objected not to the glass of wine, but the half-dozen bottles, which brought forth drunkenness. "Was life a polka," he asked, "that we should go through it dancing?" "Was life a funeral," retorted she, "that we ought to walk through it mourning?"

"Far from it," was the reply, "but life has duties the fulfilment of which involves responsibilities, and ought therefore to be reflected on seriously."

"I should like to know what great good you are doing with your gravity?" asked Miss Jones.

"Very little, truly, but at all events I labour, and earn my daily bread, as a poor man ought to do, striving to keep myself in the right frame of mind and body for the day that will come, when I shall find more genial and earnest employment in behalf of my country."

After a moment's pause, Lavinia said, —

"Men have left us women nothing in the way of

work but the honour of mending our husband's and children's stockings. When my time comes, I hope I shall perform that duty as well as my neighbours. In the meanwhile I shall amuse myself, seeing that I commit no crime in so doing. I have no genius for reforming the world; I have no country to regenerate."

"Lucky that you have not," returned Paolo, bitterly; "it is admirable in you to sneer at the most sacred feelings — feelings you ought to honour — you, born in a free land."

Lavinia's heart smote her; she tried to apologize, and burst into tears. Paolo could not bear to see her cry, and in his turn implored forgiveness for his harshness. A few kind words on both sides once more patched up a truce, which lasted as long as it could.

The Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos was the lovers' next apple of discord. Paolo declared his disapproval of Lavinia's intimacy with her ladyship in particularly strong terms. Lavinia defended her friend with a warmth worthy a better cause.

The marchioness objectionable? A person must be difficult to satisfy indeed, who thought so. Nobody did. Nobody took amiss the marquis's indefinite absence on his foreign embassy, or the marked assiduities of this or that nobleman. Nobody had ever thought twice about a report of a ghost — the ghost of poor Manue-lito, said the servants at Villa Torralba — which had haunted the gardens for some nights, and which somebody, so it was said, had watched and caught, and discovered to be a prince, who, in a state of somnambulism, had mistaken the Villa Torralba for his palace in Piazza What's-its-name. Nobody had ever thought of impeaching the marchioness's reputation on such pre-

posterous grounds. Had not the marchioness pedigree and money enough to be above suspicion or objection? Cardinals called at her house; the *crème de la crème*, both foreign and indigenous, flocked to her dinners and parties; the most *comme il faut* persons declared themselves honoured by her notice. Truth to say, this took place on the Continent, and morals are so loose on the Continent, in Italy especially, and in Rome in a superlative degree. There is but one country in the world, which shall not be named, where you may be as noble as the Emperor of China, as rich as Croesus, as splendid as Sardanapalus, but if you have a spot as large as a pin, the shadow of a blemish on your propriety, nobody will look your way, not even a dog will offer you its paw. But at Rome! —

And yet Paolo objected to her. Lavinia asked innocently what could Signor Paolo see to find fault with in the marchioness, unless it was her title? She knew he disliked titles. Paolo did not care whether the lady had one or not; he objected to her eccentric and unfeminine habits, to her driving and shooting, to her manners, to her rage for exhibiting herself in every haunt of dissipation. A woman who courted public attention as the marchioness did, was no fit companion for a young and modest girl.

Miss Jones treated these notions with the most superb disdain. They were the notions of a savage, and not those of a civilized being. If such ways were those of civilized life, Paolo gloried in being a savage.

“Are women born actresses,” cried the irate young man, “that they must be for ever parading on the boards of a stage, a spectacle for any public?”

“Are women born nuns and Sisters of Charity,”

cried Lavinia, "that they must cut their hair, wear sackcloth, and bury themselves alive?"

"It would fare better with many of them if they did," quoth the Roman; "if they did no good, they would do no harm, at least."

"That is a matter of opinion; for my part, I find the world very well as it is, and I have no mind to renounce it."

"You renounce me, then?" prompt as lightning was the answer; "I must be your world or nothing."

"Poetical exaggeration," said Lavinia.

"Once you loved poetry; I had your own words for it. Oh! how you have deceived me!"

"Deceived you!" exclaimed Lavinia, haughtily.

"Yes; deceived me," repeated Paolo, vehemently; "was it not deceiving me, when you made yourself appear what you were not? Have you forgotten the long conversation we had together at your first sitting for your portrait? We compared tastes for hours; and yours suited mine, and mine yours. Simplicity, affection, refinement, nature, those were your idols. What were jewels, operas, fashion, to a flower of the field, the song of the nightingale, a walk in the soft moonlight? I accepted every word that fell from your lips as Gospel truth; laugh at me for a fool. *You* care for flowers, or a man's honest heart! You care for nothing but noise, glitter, show, and conventionalities."

As Paolo spoke, Lavinia's proud head drooped. The conversation alluded to was as present to her mind as if it had occurred only yesterday; all that she had then said, carried away by strong sympathy, she had said in perfect good faith, and really felt at the moment; but every remembered word now fell on her conscience

with the weight of a deserved reproach, for she could not deny that the tenor of her present existence was not easily to be reconciled with the inclinations and sentiments she had professed on that occasion.

"Yes," pursued the young man, "you pursue the shadow instead of the substance; to a little tinsel you sacrifice a mine of gold. Here, within your reach, is the strength which lays low mountains, the talisman which renders invincible, the fountain which gives eternal youth, and you throw them all from you. Blind that you are," went on Paolo, with an irresistible burst of passion, "you trample upon the heart which contains all these treasures. Love, love divine, weighs less with you than a few grains of the incense of flattery. May the day never come when sickness and sorrow shall open your eyes, but too late, to the emptiness of what you hold to, to the value of what you let drop! Health, youth, riches, are but poor shields against misfortune, believe me; at all ages, and in all stations of life, we are vulnerable through those we love."

A strong conviction, unswervingly acted upon, and especially if passionately expressed, will command the respect even of those, who deem it illfounded or even wrong — nay, it will do more — it will, at certain moments, make its very opponents doubt the soundness of their own arguments against it, the wisdom of their own opposition. More than once had Lavinia, while still under the spell of Paolo's thrilling accents, entertained such doubts, such fears; half formed a resolution to humour his whims; and, if not entirely to withdraw from the gay world, at least to slacken the chains binding her to it. But these were mariner's vows. The world is a tyrannical master, and admits of no half-

service. It is like one of those irresistible machines, in which if you get so much as a limb entangled, the rest of your body is sure to follow, and be pounded to atoms.

A young lady enrolled in the world's militia can no more safely leave its ranks than a soldier his regiment on the battle-field. Fancy the brilliant Miss Jones expressing her unwillingness to go to the duchess's party, or wishing to leave some embassy ball at midnight. Nonsense! she must not lose the position she had gained; it would be stupid, or strange, or ridiculous. Who has not seen sober people quarrelled with for not drinking themselves drunk with a company flushed with wine? Who has not heard young ladies' beauty slandered because they wore high dresses? One must be endowed with a singular power of isolation to react against the intellectual atmosphere one breathes. Miss Jones had not this power; how could she have acquired it? So she rushed along with the current, the more madly that she wanted to escape from her own reflections.

Nor was Mancini himself free from occasional misgivings, that he was too absolute in his requirements, too exacting a lover. He accordingly made many resolves to be for the future more gentle and conciliating; but the passion of the moment whirled away his good purposes like leaves on the wings of the wind. "She is vulgar," would he say to himself in one of his stormy moods, "dazzled by light, intoxicated by sound, happy to display her beauty — to flutter about like a gaudy butterfly. I might sooner extract honey from a stone, than love from her heart." Then followed the reaction, and an inner voice would make itself heard, replying,

“Well, suppose her to be all this, what right have I to plague her life thus? She has been educated in this way, and she cannot change. I must either take her as she is, or leave her. To torment her as I do, is ungenerous, nay cowardly. Better cut the Gordian knot, and be done with it. I’ll write her a letter and go away — to-morrow.” The letter was written, the morrow came, and the day after to-morrow, and another and yet another morrow were added, and he was still in Rome, the prey and sport of the most harrowing irresolution. The effort he had once made he was now incapable of renewing. Seven words had unnerved him, “I love you with all my heart.” They had traced a magic circle round him which, do what he would, he could not overstep. Thornton had been a true prophet when he had foretold this state of things — Thornton who, seeing his prophecy fulfilled, far from triumphing or deriding, was to Paolo the meekest, most indulgent, and considerate of comforters and friends.

In this conflict of feeling Paolo wasted away; each succeeding hour his heart quivered and shrank in Lavinia’s hold, as does a bird in the unconsciously cruel grasp of a child.

CHAPTER XXIV.

What there is in a Roll of Parchment.

PAOLO was preparing one day to go to Miss Lavinia when he was interrupted by Du Genre, dressed *cap-à-pie* for travelling, coming in to bid him a hasty farewell. The French realist had been summoned to France by the express desire of an old uncle of his residing in

Dauphiné, on whom the faculty of medicine had passed sentence of death.

"The wish of a bachelor uncle, furnished with a brace of thousand francs for every month in the year, is sacred at all times," said the facetious Frenchman; "though I must say it is scarcely delicate of the good old gentleman to get worse just on the eve of Carnival, and thus deprive a dutiful nephew of the honest recreations of the season he had been anticipating. '*Entre la coupe et la lèvre*,' as we say in France. I should not have minded the call so much eight-and-forty hours later. But, no. I must be at Civita Vecchia by day-break, because the steamer piques itself on keeping its time to a minute. We live in an absurd world; by Jupiter! we do. We human beings are born and die in and out of season, disregarding of all order and method; and yet the things we create for our use, we insist on their being models of punctuality."

"Forty-eight hours of pleasure you can probably redeem at some other period," said Paolo, by way of comfort.

"Most illogically reasoned, my dear Telemachus: no loss is ever redeemed; if you go without dinner to-day, and eat two to-morrow, you have not made up your loss of to-day. You forget that a couple of days' respite would enable me to assist at Armida's *début*, and I regret sorely not to do so."

"What Armida? What *début*?" asked the Roman.

"No use playing the Indian with me," retorted the Frenchman; "you are too intimate in certain quarters not to know all about it, you sly rogue."

"As true as I live, I have no idea as to whom you are alluding," said Paolo, somewhat anxiously.

"To put you on the right track, I will put a dot on my I's," replied the realist, "In the first place, then, Armida is the *nom de guerre* of a ravishing Inglesina, of whom that lying jade, Rumour, says you know more than most people."

Paolo frowned.

"Oblige me by giving no nicknames to a person, to a lady, who honours me with her acquaintance."

"There, already in the saddle! as ticklish and pugnacious as an American senator," said Du Genre. "Pardon me, but I only call the fair one what all Rome calls her. I mean no disparagement, I assure you; quite the contrary. Armida is a name rendered famous, I have heard, by one of your own great poets. I never read Tasso; in point of poetry, Beranger is my alpha and omega."

"And this *début*?" inquired Paolo.

"This *début* is to take place on the day after tomorrow, at the private theatre of the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos. Every one with the smallest claim to fashion is to be there. But come now, you know better than I do."

"Go on, pray," said Paolo, briefly.

With a little less brilliancy in his intonations than usual, Du Genre continued, —

"The marchioness is Queen Elizabeth; Arm — the Inglesina, I mean — Mary Stuart. Leicester's part is entrusted to a tenor, an amateur, but who beats Mario, I am told — the Prince of Rocca-Ginestra."

To judge from the dark crimson of Paolo's countenance, all the blood in his veins had rushed tumultuously to his head; two seconds after, he was pale as death. Likely enough, Du Genre drew his own

inferences from signs that he could not but remark; but he kept his thoughts to himself, breaking a conscious silence, by saying, "Well, good-by, my dear Telemachus." — A sort of emotion, quite unanticipated, troubled his fluency. "If you come to Paris, I depend on your seeking me out, for in that heavenly city I shall surely be. Life is possible nowhere but in Paris, and, perhaps, in Rome. Paris is the place for you; it will cure you of your tragic views of life. You are one of the best fellows I know. I never flatter, but on certain matters — well, I shall not enlarge on the theme of your errors at present. Believe me, and you'll be the happier for it. Life is a farce; and, with all love and respect, I say, *Sans adieu!*" and the good-natured, volatile fellow hurried away, singing, as he ran down the stairs, in a voice that had a touch of pathos in it, "*Tout n'est dans ce bas monde qu'un jeu, qu'un jeu.*" The echo of the singer's voice had scarcely died away, when Paolo rushed forth, on his way to Palazzo Morlacchi.

There is in the heart of even a worldly woman, who loves, be it ever so little, a vein of gold, which, if properly tracked and delicately handled, will yield a crop past expectation; but, if roughly dealt with, will be lost sight of amid the rubbish in which it is imbedded. Could the incensed youth have read Miss Jones's innermost thoughts, at the moment he was breathing nothing but scorn and indignation against her, he would have fallen at her feet in adoration. Lavinia had never been so near taking a step in the direction wished by Paolo as on this particular day; it needed so little to have fostered the intention into a fact. The idea of taking a prominent part in the pri-

vate theatricals, was becoming more and more disagreeable to her; how to draw back from her promise, was the subject that preoccupied her every thought. It was not only that now, the first excitement of vanity being calmed, she had the hearty repugnance of a young and naturally modest woman to appear as a *débutante* on a stage, called private by courtesy; but that she was both frightened and annoyed at the ardour shown by the prince-tenor's pantomime towards her, ever since the dress rehearsals had commenced. Leicester was privileged by duty of his part, to kneel more than once to her, to take her hand, carry it to his heart, in short, express by look and gesture the most passionate love; and all that in duty he was bound to do, he did with a spontaneity, a life-like reality, that was the *nec plus ultra* of acting — if acting it was. The poor *pro tempore* Queen of Scots was sadly puzzled and displeased, when certain *apartés* not to be found in the libretto, reached her ear, and of which the earl-prince was lavish, when the queen-marchioness happened to be off the stage. Another source of uneasiness to Lavinia was the sudden and entire change which had come over the noble creole, since the aforesaid final rehearsals had commenced. To her ladyship's hitherto enthusiastic friendship for her English favourite, had succeeded the most icy coldness — indeed, a thorough estrangement was evidently imminent.

Miss Jones had more than once surprised flashes of anger in the fine black eyes, and tones of bitterness in the voice, of her dearest friend. Very vivid doubts suddenly awoke in the English girl's mind that the marchioness really was not the sort of woman she ought to have associated with intimately; nor the prince,

the man she ought to act and sing with; and a perception grew daily stronger upon her, that Paolo had been right in his judgment of both. Accordingly, he had perhaps never stood higher in Miss Lavinia's opinion, than when, on this day, hearing that he was in the atelier, she went thither with quick steps to meet him. Lest the reader should have forgotten it, we may as well here repeat, in a parenthesis, that the dialogue between master and pupil was always carried on in Italian, and consequently allowed the most perfect freedom of discussion; for the chaperones, Mrs. Jones, or Miss Jones's maid, who were, one or the other, always present at the interviews, were both triumphantly ignorant of any language but their own.

Lavinia's smile, as she approached him, was as rich in promise as is a rainbow in a cloudy sky, had Paolo been able rightly to interpret the sign; but at sight of his angry face, the glorious light faded away from her countenance.

"You grudge your oldest friend in Rome a share in the benefit you are going to confer on the multitude," began the Italian; "I mean," he added, seeing perplexity in her blue eyes, "I mean the pleasure of witnessing your triumphs as a singer and actress. The whole city is astir with the news of your approaching *début*, and you have left my poor hermitself in ignorance of the event; not even offered me an invitation — I should say, ticket of admission."

The tone of his voice made his words as ironical as he wished; they pained her, and made her good angel take flight.

"For a man of your high aspirations, and trans-

cidental habits," answered she, "I was certain that such frivolous amusements could have no attraction."

"Frivolous!" he re-echoed. "You are very indulgent in thus baptizing them frivolous. Would to God they were only that! Call them rather —"

"Pray," interrupted Lavinia, "spare me any more of your sermons. I am bound to render an account of my actions to *no one*, but to those who stand to me in the light of my parents."

"To no one else?" asked Paolo, with a look full of meaning.

"To no one else."

She pronounced the words firmly.

"Are you quite sure," proceeded Paolo, shaking from head to foot with repressed emotion, "are you indeed sure you have given to no one else the right of warning you?"

"If I ever gave such a right, I now withdraw it," was the quick, decided answer.

"Be it so then," exclaimed the young man, his wrath breaking bounds. "Be it so, and welcome — yes, welcome to debase yourself by way of asserting your independence — welcome to add to the indecorum of exhibiting yourself as a public actress, the disgrace of doing so in company with a man, regarded by all Rome with abhorrence and disgust."

"Your usual style of exaggeration," said she; "you lend to *all Rome* your own individual feelings."

"How becoming the defence of Prince Rocca-Ginestra sounds from your lips," sneered Paolo. "That you may better vindicate that nobleman's traduced character, allow me to relate to you one instance of his prowess."

"Save yourself the trouble," returned Lavinia, "it is quite unnecessary. I am already well aware of what really constitutes the prince's crime in your eyes."

"May I ask what you have decided that to be?"

"The being a prince," she replied, "as it was the count's being a count, as it is the marchioness's being a marchioness."

"Doubtless," retorted Paolo, "I have blasphemed your gods, and they must be revenged. What excuse shall I make? I, and such as I am, you know, are uncivilized beings, and give ourselves the luxury of despising what is despicable, in spite of escutcheon and coronets."

In all hardly contested battles, be it between two lovers, or be it between two armies, there comes a climax of exasperation, at which the wish to conquer becomes quite secondary to the wish of doing harm. This moment had arrived for Miss Lavinia; she did not believe a word of what she was going to say, but she knew it would goad him, and she said it.

"May we not affect sometimes to despise what we ——— envy?"

"Envy?" repeated he; "envy — what?"

"The grapes of the fable," said Lavinia, "were sour, because out of reach."

Paolo laughed outright, then said, —

"One instant, and I will show you the reverse of the fable."

He was gone.

There lay in a corner of Paolo's studio a rusty cylinder of tin, within which was enclosed a moth-eaten scroll of parchment, containing the letters patent of nobility of the first marquis, and count of the Holy

Roman Empire, in the family Rodipani. The title was to descend to male heirs lawfully begotten, and, in default of the same, to the heirs female, who were by a special clause empowered to transmit it to their heirs male or female. Paolo therefore, as the son and heir of the late marquis's daughter, had an incontrovertible right in force of this proviso, — and he knew that he had, — to assume the title of marquis, had he so chosen to do. This venerable parchment, rolled up in a cylinder of tin, to preserve it from all casualties, had been handed down from Rodipani to Rodipani, until, in course of time, it descended to our acquaintance, the old marquis. At his death, it passed, with a few other relics, into the hands of his daughter Bianca, married to Mancini, Paolo's father. At the demise of the latter, Paolo found the cylinder in a chest of family papers, and, loth to destroy anything that had belonged to either parent, he had laid it in a corner of his atelier to bide the ravages of time.

Well, Paolo — we crave the reader's indulgence for him; what he did was very childlike, but he was very young, and very much excited — well then, Paolo went and fetched the rusty tin case, and in about as many words as it has cost us lines, explained the nature of its contents to Miss Lavinia, finishing off with the flourish, that the grapes were within his reach, but that he scorned them. Upon this, with a somewhat melodramatic air — young folks are always so emphatic — he tore the innocent parchment in twain, and cast the pieces at Miss Jones's feet.

I must be true that women have a weakness for theatrical effects, or Lavinia would not have thought Paolo as grand as we consider him petty. He, who

could be a marquis, and would not be a marquis, appeared in her eyes a madman, but a sublime madman; and she applied herself with heart and will to cure him of such an aberration. She solemnly appealed to his reason; but her arguments, so unanswerable to her mind, broke into foam against what was a rock of principle with him, viz., that merit and demerit were strictly personal, and that the transmission of a badge of honour or dishonour to such as had done nothing to deserve the one or the other, was the acme of absurdity. She then appealed to his heart, reproaching him with little love for her, that he willingly cast aside the only sure means of conquering the obstacles that stood between him and her; she even tried to make a bargain, promising, if he would yield, to renounce now and for ever the theatricals at Villa Torralba, the prince, the marchioness and such like; but reproaches, entreaties, promises smote in vain against a sentiment all powerful with Paolo — the sentiment of what he owed to himself, to his country and party. Not for her, not for the dominion of the world, would he desert the ranks of the people and join those of the aristocracy. He was too proud of his title of plebeian to exchange it for that of marquis, and so on. Paolo was not the son of his father for nothing. Lavinia did not, and could not understand him, nor he her. The difference of education, of the habits and feelings of a whole life, of the social and political state of the respective countries to which they belonged, raised between the two a sort of mental Chinese wall, which time alone, and dearly bought experience, and, above all, a change in the moral atmosphere, which both had hitherto exclusively breathed might level. The upshot of the present inter-

view was, that they parted in anger, never, as far as words went, to meet again.

Perhaps the chapter ought not to conclude without meeting a question, probably asked by this time. Was there any justifiable foundation for Paolo's attacks upon the Prince of Rocca Ginestra? What had the prince done so dreadfully wrong? Here is a categoric answer. The prince, under an assumed humble name and station, had seduced a girl of the Transtevere, renowned for her beauty, and refused to right her when her fault could no longer be concealed. The young woman, in despair, had thrown herself into the Tiber. The sad catastrophe created a great sensation, which lasted just the time great sensations last in large and busy cities. The prince left Rome, and spent a couple of years in travelling abroad, and, on his return, was an ornament, as before, of the best society. The universal feelings of abhorrence and disgust, about which Paolo enlarged, were, to say the truth, wholly confined to a few visionaries like himself, and to the Transteverini, who had not forgotten what had happened to one of their body, and who thenceforth bore a grudge to the prince, as uncivilized people are wont to do in similar cases.

CHAPTER XXV.

A Crash.

It is the 28th of December, the day fixed for the great operatic performance at Villa Torralba. The evening is cold and rainy. Rain and cold are of little matter to the rich, who have at their disposal downy-cushioned, comfortable carriages, and plenty of furs and cashmeres to shelter them from such nuisances. The

crème de la crème are on their way to the Marchioness Delfuego y Arcos'.

In his room in the Via Babuino sits Paolo, more dead than alive. The die is cast, Paolo will be away presently. His trunks are packed, and already on the travelling carriage, which is standing at the street door. Post horses are bespoken, and Thornton's Italian servant waits but a word from his master to go and fetch them. Thornton himself, paler and thinner than ever, the double scar round his mouth more marked than usual, walks in and out of the room, seats himself for an instant, rises the next; he is anxious and perplexed. At last he ventures on saying, "Shall we send for the horses, Paolo?"

"Not yet, not before Salvator comes; he is to be here the moment the — the entertainment is over. I cannot decently go after making him promise to come."

Mortimer is silent: he goes away, returns, sits down, gets up; at last, he speaks again.

"What is the use of prolonging this agony? If any good could arise from delay — but you know, she will do as she said. Salvator told you this morning he had heard of no change in her intention. Better go at once, if you are to go at all. Come, Paolo, be a man."

"Ah! it is easy to say, be a man," Paolo says, with a smile that brings tears to Thornton's eyes; "less easy to be so, when all your blood gushes out through a large gap in your heart."

Mortimer walks to the window, and by the light of the street lamps studies the pouring rain. Thornton feels the more keenly for Paolo, because he sees in him

a living image of himself, as he was years ago, only he had had no friend by his side.

Paolo flings himself on the sofa, and buries his head in the cushions. Paolo cannot believe that he is really going from Rome, cannot believe that Lavinia will ever consummate an act, which he has told her is to separate them for ever. His whole being clings desperately to this woman, as a shipwrecked mariner clings to the plank which is his only chance of life. Paolo hopes against hope, and finds legitimate reasons for hope in all the possible, and next to impossible, contingencies suggested by his fevered brain. She might have altered her mind at the last minute; the performance might have been put off on account of the weather (even a respite would be a godsend to him); somebody might be ill — not she, God forbid! but the marchioness, the prince might have a cold; or the accursed theatre might have caught fire; or an earth-quake shaken it from its foundations as the curtain rose. Why not? such things had been; he recollected the story of an unfortunate wretch, absolutely on his way to the scaffold, whose life had been saved by such a catastrophe.

Hark! eight o'clock strikes, — the fatal hour. A whistle, and there she is on the stage in all her beauty. Hundreds of eyes are riveted on and devour the noblest form that ever came from the hands of nature. She sings; every breath is held; you might hear the fall of a pin. She sings as she alone can sing, as she sang to him. She ceases, and long loud plaudits make the walls tremble; bouquets fall in a shower at her feet; fashionables of all ages, with curly locks or bald pates, or hoary-haired lords, dukes, princes, loll half out of

the boxes, languidly flapping their white gloves together, striving who shall win a look or a smile from her. She bows and smiles, and smiles and bows; retires, and is forced to reappear, and encored *sine fine*. There never was such a *furore* of admiration. Well may she look as radiantly happy as she does; happy, independently of him; happy without him; happy in spite of him; happy, while his heart breaks. No, it cannot! it shall not be. Here comes the avenger. A young man, so pale and haggard, more like a phantom than real flesh and blood, reels towards her. She shrinks from him in terror; he follows, reaches her, and stabs himself at her feet. There, it is her work.

While the young man's heated imagination was running riot on such scenes, Mortimer watched the lapse of time.

"Half-past nine, Paolo; had anything occurred to put a stop to the performance, Salvator would have been here long ago. Shall I send for the horses?"

"Not yet; not till Salvator comes. Have patience with me, I pray."

Another hour went by, a vigorous pull at the door bell, and in rushed Salvator Rosa, as thoroughly drenched as if he had spent the last week at the bottom of a well. Water dripped from his shapeless hat, from the sleeves, from the flaps of his famous black coat, water ran down from his brow, nose, ears, chin, hands. His progress through the room was like that of a watering-pot. A small lake formed on the spot where he stood still. He would have served as a model for a river god.

"Well?" exclaimed Paolo.

"Well?" exclaimed Thornton.

Salvator had run so fast that he had no breath left to speak his tidings. He pointed to his tongue, which clove to his palate, and by signs asked for drink. Mortimer went for some wine, and was in the act of pouring some into a glass, when the little man snatched the bottle from his hand, and, putting it to his mouth, half emptied it at a draught. Giving a long sigh of relief, half-singing, half-speaking, he pronounced, —

"Fiasco solenne."

"Poor fellow, say no more until you have changed your clothes," said Thornton.

"No, no; first and foremost, my story," cried the excited painter of scenes; "though I will pull off my boots, if you have a pair of slippers to spare, it needn't stop my tongue." Seated with his back to the fire, and struggling violently with his wet boots, Salvator began, "Well, there never was a more promising beginning —"

"What about Miss Jones?" interrupted Paolo.

"Miss Jones is safe at home. Well," he continued, allowing Thornton to take off his coat, and put a railway wrapper round him.

"Did she, or did she not, appear on the stage?" asked Paolo.

"Yes, she did, of course;" and Salvator, for the third time, repeated his beginning "Well," when Paolo a third time abruptly stopped him with, —

"What has happened to her?"

"My dear fellow," returned the good-natured narrator, "if you won't let me speak, you will never hear what has happened. Well," resumed he for the fourth time, "as I said before, there never was a more promising beginning, nor a more sudden or melancholy conclusion; though, I must say, I, for my part, have

not been without misgivings as to something of the sort. *Il sospetto in cor parlava*; but I must not anticipate. The first chorus was got through beautifully, and the tenor's *Ah! chi sa se in questo istante* was charmingly sung. Even a tyro, and the prince is far from that, could not have helped producing an effect; the words are so pathetic. I wrote them myself really from inspiration; I did, I assure you. Well, to the point. Next, you know, comes the contralto's *recitativo obbligato*. Armid —, Miss Lavinia, I mean, gave it in masterly style; it created a *furore*, the very chairs clapped. Upon my faith, Paolo, when a woman possesses a voice like that, it is a sin to smother it."

"If you would oblige me by leaving all comments for another time, and give us facts now," was the reply.

"*Gelosia il sen mi lacera*," sang the incorrigible little fellow.

"Well, let us stick to facts. Miss Mary Stuart's recitative is followed by a cavatina commencing with a lovely adagio, which progresses into an andantino vivace, during which Prince of Rocca Ginestra — Leicester, I mean — makes his appearance. Here is the culminating point of the first act, the duetto between the tenor and contralto. Let me explain the plot clearly. The scene is in a forest. Leicester, who has accompanied Queen Elizabeth on a hunting expedition, gives his royal mistress the slip, and comes to where Queen Mary is in tears. *Perche piangi?* and all the rest. She gives her motives for weeping: '*Sola son tradita oppressa — non un cor che al mio risponda.*' 'There is a heart which answers thine,' says Leicester. 'Whose heart?' asks she. 'Mine.' Upon which he falls at her

feet, and roars out a sublime *Io t'amo*. With this tremendous *Io t'amo* ends the andante vivace of the duetto and *subito* the stretta begins, *m'ami dunque? Io t'amo, oh gioja!* ta-ta-ta — re-re-re-ra. It is at this juncture — after the stretta, mark, and not before — that Queen Elizabeth ought to step forth and surprise Leicester at the feet of Mary. Here is the moment to inform you of certain suspicions of mine. A series of observations which I had made, quite involuntary, on the marchioness during the latter rehearsals, had given me some not very vague apprehensions that this duetto would bring forth mischief. I had seen her ladyship change colour at certain ticklish passages; then she was so whimsical, so peevish, cavilling constantly at the two singers, ridiculing Leicester's exaggerated acting, finding fault with the English young lady's singing, even going so far one day as to propose that the duetto should be left out; — in short, her behaviour was so unaccountable, that I could not get rid of the belief that the jealousy of Queen Elizabeth would not be feigned. You know, or perhaps you do not know, that it is believed the marchioness — how shall I say it? it is hard to speak against a person whose bread I eat — well, the rumour is, that there is a flirtation between her and the prince. It may be so, or it may not: rumour, generally speaking, is a liar; but the upshot of the duetto was this. Leicester, on his knees, had scarcely sung out his passionate *Io t'amo*, when, lo and behold! — my hair rises on my head again at the mere recollection — out comes the marchioness with the spring of a tigress, and sends the luckless prince flat on his back. The orchestra, busy with the stretta, losing their wits at the untimely entry, hesitate, blunder, and stop; the audience, in

their ignorance, applaud such natural acting. Something must be done. I leap out of my prompter's box, run to the scenes on the left, and, piff-paff, let down the curtain. Was it a time coming down, that weary curtain! However, down it was at last, and then I hurried to the field of battle. All the staff of the theatre were already assembled there. The scene that was enacting baffles description. The prince, with some of the men of the chorus, were endeavouring to pacify, and induce the enraged marchioness to leave the stage, so that what she was saying might not be heard by those in the boxes and the pit. But there she stood in a paroxysm of passion, threatening with hands and looks Miss Lavinia, and calling her bad names, luckily in Spanish. Miss Lavinia, white as the whitest marble, but composed and self-collected, stood erect like a true queen, gazing scornfully at her antagonist, not speaking a word, save when she said, on my approaching her, 'I deserve it all for having ever set my foot in this house. I have not lacked for warnings. Tell this to Signor Paolo.' Depend upon it, my friend, there is the right stuff of a woman in that girl. Presently, the audience began to show symptoms of impatience. A noise, like that of the rising tide, diversified with a hiss or two, were premonitory signs of a coming storm. I shook myself up, and with a 'To the breach, friend Salvator!' slipped from behind the curtain, and summoning to my aid my best bow and most winning smile, said, *coram populo*, 'The marchioness offers to this distinguished assembly her heartfelt regret and excuses; she deposes me, ladies and gentlemen, to assure you, that no one here present can more sincerely deplore than does her ladyship the unfortunate indisposition of

one of the principal performers, which puts an inevitable stop to the opera for this evening.' For an impromptu not so bad, was it? but, for pity's sake, something to drink, or I shall never get to the end of my story. I have not finished yet; there is a tail to the comet."

Salvator drank, smacked his lips expressively, and continued, "To make what followed clear to you, I must use the past tense. Have patience a moment. For days, you must understand, I had been urging on the marchioness the propriety and prudence of admitting no one behind the scenes, save those who had business there. At last, and not without difficulty, I got her persuaded to issue this prohibition; but at the same time she insisted on an exception in favour of Count Fortiguerra, a special favourite of hers. He would be so useful, he was so clever and experienced, and all that. He was useful, no gainsaying that, though his presence was a perpetual eyesore to me. I distrusted him greatly; not in consequence of Paolo's surmises about him; no, I had surer foundations to build on. One of our chorus singers, an elderly man, a native of Ancona, had recognized him as a fellow-citizen, and repeatedly warned us that he was no count at all, but a noted swindler. Be this true or not, the old Anconitan, Clelia and I, agreed that we would keep a close watch on the *soi-disant* count; for, besides all sorts of costly dresses and valuable ornaments, there were the marchioness's diamonds to be specially looked after. They had been arranged for the occasion as a diadem to be worn in the last act, and their value, the marchioness said, was immense. Clelia had charge of this crown, and some other jewels, kept in their cases, ready for use, in a light closet adjoining the stage, and which served as

her ladyship's dressing-room. In the surprise and bustle of the improvised scene of jealousy, the count and the diamonds were forgotten by us all three. Now, to return. When, after performing another graceful salaam to the public, I retired once more behind the curtain, I was charmed to find actual hostilities had ceased. My lady had allowed herself to be led to the very back of the stage, and, though still looking fierce, looked less intensely so than before. She had ceased venting her fury in language, and maintained a sullen silence. All this I saw at a glance, and also that Clelia was absent. Instantly the diamonds recurred to me. She is gone to look after them, thought I. Scarcely had the thought been formed, when a wild cry issued from the dressing-room. It was Clelia's voice. I made but one bound from the spot where I stood, into the closet, and there I saw — we all saw, for every one on the stage followed at my heels — there we saw Clelia wrestling with the count, and the jewel-cases scattered on the ground. No need of words to explain what was the matter. Surprised in the very act of possessing himself of the jewels, the so-called count had let them drop, and was struggling to make his escape, which he might have easily done by a back stair, had Clelia's grasp of him been less resolutely tenacious. In another instant, I and some other men had hold of him. Well, what do you think the impudent rascal did? I scarcely believed my ears. As sure as I am here, he declared that he had caught Clelia in the act of making off with the diamonds, and that we had come in time to help him to secure her. But people can't help believing their own eyes, and no one for a moment doubted who was the thief. The prince called out for the gendarmes

— there were half-a-dozen on duty at the villa — but the marchioness, breaking her silence, and looking rather pleased than not, forbade any stir to be made. ‘Let the fellow go,’ said she. ‘I am not astonished at his turning out a thief; he was introduced to me at that fine lady’s house,’ pointing to Miss Lavinia, who really looked more dead than alive. I whispered to Clelia to take the young English lady away to the laundry, while I, on my side, would try to find her uncle and aunt. I was fortunate enough to do so at once, and I ordered their carriage to a back entrance. Poor Miss Jones, how she clung to my Clelia! She put on one of Clelia’s dresses to go away in; and there’s an end of my story. I was told, as I made my way upstairs, to call down Miss Lavinia, that my lady had laconically dismissed every one about her, and retired to her own apartment. Clelia, who has been sleeping at the villa for the last fortnight, chose to stay, saying she would not leave her mistress in this moment of trial; so nothing remained for me to do, but to come hither as fast as I could — and here I am.”

Having concluded his narrative, Salvator allowed himself to be persuaded to go and change his wet clothes, an act of prudence performed with harlequin-like celerity. Our trio, being too excited to have any chance of sleep, sat through the remainder of the night, talking of, and annotating on the events just narrated. Is it necessary to add, that the post horses were countermanded, and the travelling carriage ordered back to the coach-house? Lavinia in tears, Lavinia repentant, Lavinia unhappy, had a thousandfold stronger hold on Paolo’s heart than Lavinia the queen of beauty, Lavinia triumphant and happy. To go to her, to throw himself

at her feet, to seek pardon for his roughness, to comfort and console her, such were now the yearnings of Paolo's whole soul. Thornton hazarded no remonstrance, did not even evince any surprise at Paolo's change of mind as to their intended departure. More than ever convinced that no good could come of his friend's attachment to Miss Jones, he felt that it was too deep-rooted to leave any chance of its being combated with success. Why then afflict one already so grievously afflicted? He could not harbour such a thought. Therefore, neither approving, nor disapproving, he kept Paolo faithful company down the dangerous slope he was bent on treading, intent only on sparing, or at least softening for him, the shocks and falls inevitable on that slippery descent.

About dawn, Salvator's spirit refusing to support his flesh any longer, he gave way, and stretching his weary little body on a tolerably hard sofa, was soon sound asleep. Salvator's lively tongue once at rest, all conversation ceased; Paolo and Thornton sat on awhile, each communing with his own thoughts, until the bright sun shining into the room, warned them to make ready for another day's burdens.

The friends had not long retired to their own rooms, when a letter was brought to Paolo. It was from Lavinia. She wrote: —

"If you are generous enough, and I am sure you are, to wish to see once more one who has rendered you evil for good, pray come here as soon as you can. We leave this evening; I shall be at home all day. It will be a great comfort to me, if he who has witnessed my folly should also witness my repentance.

"L. J."

What transports of joy and despair did these few lines give rise to: joy at the entire recantation avowed by them, despair at the intimation of approaching separation. The resolution of the English family to quit Rome, will surprise no one less than it did Paolo. He had been sure of it. After what had passed, even a man less sensitive to the world's ridicule than Mr. Jones, might be reasonably apprehensive of, and shrink from the award of public opinion. The one fact of having patronized — worse, of having allowed himself to be patronized by — an impostor and matriculated thief, was sufficient to make the most self-conceited soul alive, aware, that, for the present, Rome was no place for him or his family.

The abrupt and mysterious termination of the entertainment at Villa Torralba, was, naturally enough, the talk of all the city. The most absurd stories were circulating, and, moreover, finding credence; for instance, the marchioness in a fit of jealousy had stabbed the Prince of Rocca Ginestra, whose life was despaired of; a fabulous sum, and a fabulous amount of diamonds, had been offered to, and accepted by the Government as hush-money. Miss Jones had, in her attempt to save the prince, her betrothed, received a serious wound. These were the prominent *on dits* of wide-mouthed rumour, brought to Via Babuino by Salvator, who had gone out early to collect the public gossip.

Paolo went to Palazzo Morlacchi at as early an hour as he decently could. The first part of the interview was such as might be expected, under the circumstances, from two noble extreme natures — a struggle of generosity as to who should take the most blame, and most exonerate the other. The second scene was

as intimate, explicit, and full of candour, as was to be looked for from two young lovers, who, after much discord, found out that they had but one mind, one heart between them, and were on the point of parting. Paolo had made more way in Lavinia's heart during the last few hours, than during the previous four months of their acquaintance. They solemnly pledged their troth the one to the other, and interchanged love tokens — Paolo giving to Lavinia a small gold ring, once his mother's, and Lavinia, at his prayer, cutting off one of her heavy ringlets for him. She also willingly promised to humour a whim of his, never to alter her style of wearing her hair, but to wear it twisted into a diadem round her head, as it was when he first saw and loved her.

"When we next meet," said childlike Paolo, "the mere sight of your hair arranged in the way I like so much, will tell me that you have thought of me and still love me."

And now it remained to be settled when and where Paolo could join her. As neither aunt nor niece knew anything of Mr. Jones's plans for the future, save that Siena was to be their first halt, the fixing on a date and place of meeting beforehand was a matter of utter impossibility. All that Lavinia could do was to promise that whenever they should be certain of stopping somewhere for any length of time, she would let Paolo know, and send their address. Then he would join them, but not before a certain time had elapsed between the day of his receiving her letter and that of his departure. This condition greatly ruffled the impatient young man, who, however, was made to understand how Mr. Jones's suspicions could not fail to be aroused

by the coincidence of Paolo's immediate arrival with the fact of their having just settled. Lavinia named a month, but, on Paolo's urgent entreaties, reduced it to a fortnight. That fortnight aunt and niece would employ in trying to prepare Mr. Jones for Paolo's possible reappearance, on the strength of a project they had heard him mention, of visiting that particular town or city.

The moment of separation was now at hand. Those who have been in a similar predicament know what such moments are like; words cannot describe it to those who are ignorant of such bitter quarters of an hour, when the liveliest faith, and the most vivid hopes, grow dim. Clelia, luckily or unluckily, made her appearance at this critical moment. She had come, at Lavinia's own pressing invitation, to be thanked for the kindness shown in the emergency at Villa Torralba. Paolo was thus forced to put a control on his emotions, and Lavinia's farewell was more constrained than perhaps it might otherwise have been. But there were no reasons to prevent Paolo from showing his feelings towards kind Mrs. Jones. He took an affectionate leave of her, and a more formal one of Mr. Jones, and then, with a full heart, went his way.

As the Jones's travelling carriage emerged from Porta del Popolo at six o'clock that same evening, Lavinia noticed a tall figure wrapped in a cloak by the roadside, and saw, with a fluttering heart, a white handkerchief waved towards her — the last salute of poor bereaved Paolo.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the Rack.

So long as the honey gathered at his last meeting with Miss Jones remained fresh on Paolo's lips, life went on with him better than he had hoped; but when each succeeding day and week carried away a particle of the sweet, and the bitter beneath made itself felt anew; when, to be more clear, the recollections, the images and feelings, connected with that blessed interview, began to fade, and to be superseded by recollections, images, and feelings of far older date, and far less agreeable nature; a new hell commenced for our poor friend. Wherever she went, the allurements of the world were sure to pursue one of her beauty and accomplishments; and could she, nay, would she, resist them for his sake? Was there any good reason why what had been, should not be again? Surely, she had forgotten him by this time; and so on. Such were the promptings of the tormentor within Paolo. Doubt, distrust, and jealousy, "the jaundice of the soul," kept him ever on the rack. Confidence in love is like the flower of the aloes, it blossoms but once.

He ate not, slept not, spoke not, he wandered about like a soul in pain. His sole solace, his sole diversion, were long walks alone of a night, out by that Porta del Popolo, where he had seen her for the last time. Shut up in his atelier all day long, inaccessible to his friends, even to Thornton and Salvator, unmindful of colours and palette, he rolled unceasingly his Sisiphus stone. The only human being he did not shrink from, was Salvator's betrothed. Clelia had seen *her* last,

thought well of her, and succeeded at intervals in inspiring him with some of her own faith in her. But Clelia's visits were rare as an angel's, and indeed so were Salvator's attempts to see him. All his time, as well as Clelia's, was taken up by the concerns at Villa Torralba, where *opus fervebat* now more than ever. Her ladyship had quickly recovered the late shock to her feelings, and had devoted all the resources of her active mind, and full purse, to filling up the important hiatus left in her operatic company by Miss Jones's secession. A professional *prima donna* had been engaged in Naples, rehearsal followed rehearsal apace, and scarcely two weeks after the date of the *fiasco solenne*, Maria Stuarda was performed to the accompaniment of the unbounded applause, and enthusiastic admiration of the same select audience, who, but a few days back, had made it the butt of their ridicule, and freely slandered in every one of their drawing-rooms the entertainer and the entertainment. No people in the world like fine people for their *savoir vivre*.

Seven weeks had gone by, and no letter from Miss Jones. What more conclusive proof could there be that he was forgotten? Despair was gnawing at the very core of Paolo's heart. Now, what had really become of the travellers? They only passed through Siena. Siena was bitterly cold and windy at that moment, and cold and wind peculiarly affected Mrs. Jones, grown more delicate than ever. Genoa would have suited her better, with its bright sun and balmy air, but it did not boast of sufficient English society for Mr. Jones, who objected, besides, to the narrow streets, all up and down, and, above all, to the Genoese cookery, which he pronounced uneatable. So, after a sojourn there of

some days, away they went again; this time to Nice. No want of English there; plenty and to spare. Nice found favour in Mr. Jones's eyes; it possessed also casinos and reading rooms. What he got to eat was far from good, but endurable; enough to prevent any immediate danger of starvation. The ladies liked the genial climate, the verdant hills, the blue sky, and sea. In this beatific condition of a family all of a mind, the Joneses pitched their tents *pro tempore* in Nice. *Pro tempore* mark, for Mr. Jones, repeatedly sounded as to the duration of their stay, with his constant diplomatic rejoinder of, "we shall see," remained a perfect sphinx to aunt and niece. They were thus afraid to venture a letter to Paolo.

In the meanwhile, pleasant acquaintances blossomed for the Joneses; they visited *quantum suff.*, and partook in moderation of the amusements of the carnival. One cannot shut oneself up, like an owl in an ivy bush, while every other Christian mortal around one is gathering together, and — dancing. From the time of their leaving Rome, up to their arrival at Nice, Lavinia had lived like a nun; she had not yet overcome the shock of the catastrophe at Villa Torralba, and, to do her justice, had been quite under the dominion of the feelings roused by her separation from Paolo. But now she grew a little impatient at her own state of normal despondency, and welcomed a little diversion. She had no more hesitation in so doing, than an invalid to swallow a potion prescribed by the physician. So long as she contracted no more intimacies, and did not make herself in any way conspicuous, she thought to herself, that she was committing no treason against Paolo. She was sure he would not grudge her some relaxation.

This congenial regimen came to a sudden stop. Small towns, where everybody meets and knows everybody — an allusion, of course, applying solely to strangers, the aborigines counting for nothing — small towns have their inconveniences for those who, like Mr. Jones, have precedents they would fain forget, and have forgotten. The signal for the Joneses' retreat from Nice was given by the arrival of an English family, with whom they had been acquainted at Rome. Paris is big enough to allow of a man, be he ever so on the defensive, spending some time there without much fear of disagreeable encounters. Our family, therefore, proceeded to Paris, and were soon as comfortably established as money could make them.

Among the pleasant acquaintances made at Nice, figured a certain Vicomte du Verlat, a well-bred, well-informed, sober-looking, middle-aged man, who had gone to Paris the week before Mr. Jones had felt himself compelled to decide on going thither also. But before his departure, the vicomte had left his Paris address with the Joneses, courteously soliciting the favour of being made acquainted with their presence in the French capital, whenever they might happen to be there. The state of the political horizon just then, as everybody may remember, clearly pointed to a close alliance between the two nations, and this anticipation created a reciprocal feeling of cordiality, which extended even to individuals. No sooner in Paris, than Mr. Jones left a card at the vicomte's hotel. The vicomte called immediately, begging leave to introduce his mother — wife he had none — and his sister, the générale. The introduction was mutually agreeable. Madame La Vicomtesse was a lively old lady of seventy, as fond

of company, of dress, hot rooms, and late hours, as any gay young woman of twenty. The générale, so called from the rank of her husband, was one of the mirrors of fashion.

The old vicomtesse invited her son's English friends to a great dinner, and the générale gave them a *soirée dansante*. Lavinia produced a great sensation at both — so pretty and so rich — and invitations fell in showers on the English family, much of the same calibre, and in the same way, dear reader, as is so graphically described in Lady Morgan's late Autobiography. In a wonderfully short time the Joneses were well launched in the best Parisian society.

And was the promised letter still unwritten to Paolo? Indeed, yes. More than the half of February had passed in this agreeable atmosphere, and still Mr. Jones continued impenetrable as to his intention of going or staying. It would be doing Miss Jones an unpardonable injustice to say that she was grown indifferent to the performance of a solemn promise. Though gently rocked into patience by the waves of admiration on which she floated, Lavinia had not relapsed into the Lavinia of Rome. Even in the midst of her triumphs as a beauty, she did think of the absent one; did think of him with a daily growing sense of uneasiness, lest he should misconstrue her long silence. After all, why should she not venture on writing? Even if they were to quit Paris, their next move could not be but to England, whither, at the worst, Mancini might easily follow them. Mrs. Jones warmly seconded the plan. Lavinia accordingly, on the 3rd of March, wrote and posted a letter for Rome, about the contents of which, all that it matters us to know is, that she stated her

reasons for not writing before, and gave her present address in Paris, 25, Boulevard des Capucines. This note despatched, Mrs. and Miss Jones spent a good deal of their spare time in calculating the probable epoch of Signor Mancini's arrival, with a view principally so to arrange matters as to have no peremptory engagements on their hands. According to their reckoning, Paolo, starting a fortnight after receipt of Miss Jones's letter, as had been settled, could not be in Paris before the end of March, at the soonest. They reckoned without Paolo's impatience.

Lavinia's letter had on him the effect that the introduction of air has on the half-dead bird shut up in a pneumatic machine. It revived him. His sombre despondency gave place to a feverish animation, a frantic longing to leave Rome at once. Those who know by experience what it is to be sick with hope deferred; those, for instance, who, receiving news of the dangerous illness of a far away mother or wife, burn to be on the road, yet for days have their movements hampered by passports, and police visas, — those alone can form an idea of the intensity of Paolo's impatience and restlessness. Fifteen more days of hell, in sight of paradise open and expecting you, are quite an eternity. The slave of his own word, Paolo uttered no complaint, but pined away in silence, consumed by a low fever. No food, no rest by day or night. Thornton at last took fright at Paolo's ghastly paleness and lustrous eyes, until his fears, overcoming his repugnance to advise a step implying the breach of a promise — he did give the advice. Whatever the cause, reasoned Thornton, on which may be founded the desirableness of a fortnight's delay between the date of the letter's

arrival and that of Paolo's starting, this cause must yield to a far more grave and pressing one: the probability of an illness or worse. Six days, more or less (nine days of the fatal term had elapsed by this time), cannot be of any material importance; some woman's whim, I daresay: to Paolo it is an affair of life or death.

Believing himself justified by such apprehensions, Thornton then proposed to Paolo that they should begin their journey at once, without further waiting, and Paolo grasped at the proposal as eagerly as a prisoner under sentence of death grasps at an offered respite. Their passage from Civita Vecchia was quick and horribly boisterous. Paolo, who throughout had suffered all the martyrdoms of sea-sickness, though scarcely able to stand on landing, nevertheless obstinately refused to take any rest, insisting on going on immediately to Lyons, a long and dreary journey before the two great southern cities of France were connected by a railroad. There he had to resign himself to a forced halt of a couple of hours, and *en route* again by express train to Paris, where they arrived at seven in the evening. Theirs had not been travelling, it had been a race.

Thornton, who had been often in Paris before, took Paolo to a furnished house, which he had, on such occasions, preferred to showy, noisy hotels, and where he had always found a quiet, neat, comfortable lodging, with an obliging, well-bred landlady. This house stood at the corner of the Rue St. Honoré and the Rue de Rohan; this last street destined soon to disappear in the carrying out of the enlargement and embellishment of the city of Paris, as connected with the completion of

the Louvre. Something to Thornton's disappointment, Madame Françoise, his model landlady, interspersed her welcome with various explanatory notes, as to how she, along with the other householders of the Rue de Rohau, had, consoled by a handsome indemnity, been condemned to expropriation; already, indeed, part of her movables had been transferred to another house; but there were still some rooms untouched, and, if they would suit *ce bon* Mr. Thornton, they should be at his disposal, until Madame Françoise should be served with a definite notice to evacuate the premises. While this negotiation was pending, Paolo, far too impatient to wait for its conclusion, was changing his dress in one of the still furnished rooms.

It was past nine o'clock when Paolo, having finished his hasty toilette, desired that a coach might be sent for; he was too faint and giddy to walk. In vain did Mortimer try to dissuade him from seeking the Joneses at so late an hour; Paolo was not in a frame of mind or body to listen to sober counsel. Like Manzoni's poor Renzo after his libations at the Osteria of the Mezza Luna, our young friend could do nothing by halves. Paolo's excitement, for not being caused by wine, did not the less make his blood boil in his veins. So Thornton sent for a coach, and followed Paolo into it. Paolo said he would rather pay his first visit alone.

"I don't mean to call this evening," said Mortimer; "but as you are quite a stranger to Paris, I may as well go with you to the Boulevard des Capucines. I shall leave you at the door, if the family are at home. At all events, have an address of our lodging in your pocket;" and he gave him one.

Paolo yielded the point, and away they drove.

There were more people in the streets, than the inducements of the hour well accounted for, considering the overcast sky, and the biting cold. Men and women in masquerade were sauntering hither and thither, wild shouts and yells issuing from the various groups. Hunting horns at a corner of a street, lustily answered by hunting horns from another corner, made the air ring with *fanfares*, which fell on Paolo's ears like something hellish. Strains of gay music borne on the wind, and a shuffling and trampling of feet, testified to waltzes, galopes, and whirling crowds. They passed a fine mansion, brilliantly illuminated with gas: mounted dragoons were stationed at the entrance, and regulated the advancing procession of carriages. Paolo saw flowers, and diamonds, and brilliant uniforms glittering in those equipages. Floods of music came from within. "A Walpurgis night," thought bewildered Paolo; "nothing but assembling, and feasting, and carousing all through the world. I declare they are mad, unless I am mad myself; perhaps I am; my head, I feel it, is all in a confusion. This Paris will be the death of me." Paolo was, indeed, disordered: half his thoughts he unconsciously expressed aloud.

"The majority of men are everywhere like children, who cannot bear to be left alone," observed Thornton, in a grave voice; "nothing frightens the most of them so much as a quiet *tête-à-tête* with themselves."

The sights and sounds grating so harshly on Paolo's irritated nerves, and so unaccountable to a new comer, would have been immediately understood by any one, who knew anything of Paris and its habits. Our two travellers had reached the gayest capital in the world on the 23rd of March, which happened to be the day

of mid-Lent, what the French call *La mi-Carême*. A race so mercurial, sociable, and greedy of excitement as the French, and especially the Parisians, could never go through the forty days of Lent without getting the jaundice. To avoid this danger, they cut it in half, and the day which marks the division, *i. e.* the *mi-Carême*, they make one of general rejoicing and carousing — in fact, a complete carnival compressed into the space of four-and-twenty hours. Hence the masqueraders and the fiddles, the hunting-horns and the big house with its thousand lights — no other than the Ministère de la Marine, opening its salons to stars and garters, and even less distinguished mortals, among them some of Paolo's acquaintances. Who was to dream of his being in Paris on the 23rd, when his arrival at the end of March was scarcely to be expected?

And so it came to pass that he found the Jones family ready for a ball in Paris, just as, some months ago, he had found them ready for a ball in Rome. Miss Jones, in full array, now as then — bouquet, cassolette, fan, tablets, embroidered handkerchief — the coincidence was little calculated to dissipate the gloom weighing on her lover's spirits. One alteration, seen at a glance, struck him most painfully. That rich and glossy hair of hers, which, for his sake, she was to wear diadem-like, which was to be, on their first meeting, a sort of banner, as it were, of her unchanged feelings, was, alas! gathered into two large rolls right and left of her head, in obedience to the fashion of the moment. His hopes sank, and so might his legs, but for a friendly arm-chair close by, at which he caught for support. Miss Jones felt the awkwardness of the situation the more, as she could do nothing to improve it in the way of

the warm welcome prompted by her heart, in the presence of her uncle, standing there with looks of mingled suspicion and vexation. Mrs. Jones had entirely lost all presence of mind. The scene, though short and mute, did not lack meaning.

Miss Lavinia was the one to break the spell. She said how glad she was, how glad they all were, to see their kind Roman friend at Paris, and how she regretted that for this evening they could not have the pleasure of his society.

Paolo stammered out his regret for having intruded at what he saw was an unseasonable hour.

"When would he call again?" asked Lavinia.

"At midday on the morrow," said Paolo.

Mrs. Jones here said some words in a low voice to her niece, who replied,

"No, do not come to-morrow morning, we are engaged in the morning; but," added she, "come to tea at nine. It is so lucky we have no engagement for the evening. You will come?"

He said he would.

"Good-bye, and don't be later than nine," she added, with a smile.

The interview was over; it had not lasted ten minutes.

Paolo would fain have walked home, to let the bitter, icy night wind cool his hot, throbbing temples; but he felt as if his legs were weak as water. He beckoned to a coach, and, as he threw himself into it, called out "Via Babuino." The coachman declared he knew of no such street. Something of remonstrance in the man's voice forced Paolo to a mental effort, and then he recollected careful Thornton having made him

put into his waistcoat pocket a card on which was written his Paris address.

"*A la bonne heure,*" says the driver, "Rue de Rohan."

As he drove along, Paolo at moments was not sure whether he was in Rome or in Paris — at moments the very consciousness of his own identity forsook him.

"How are your friends?" inquired Thornton as soon as he saw the young man.

"Quite well, very well indeed," said Paolo, taking up a candle.

"You made but a short visit," insisted Mortimer.

"Very short. Good night," said Paolo.

"Won't you take a cup of tea before you go to bed? it will refresh you."

"No, thank you, I feel perfectly well;" and this time Thornton found no more questions to ask.

Paolo went to his bed, and made, it must be confessed, so poor a night of it, that he might as well have sat up, and unburdened his heart to his good friend. Not that he was suffering acutely, either mentally or physically; no, on the contrary, there was a kind of damper on his outer and inner man, which deadened all his sensations. What harassed him most was the impossibility of sleeping, combined with the greatest desire to do so. He stumbled incessantly against the narrow bridge, which forms the boundary between vigil and sleep. Whenever he neared the longed-for end, he slipped, and startled by the shock, was wide awake again from head to foot. Towards the morning he had an hour or more of heavy slumber, haunted by painful fantastic visions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A Ball at the Hôtel de Ville.

THE reason why the ladies of the Boulevard des Capucines had put off a second visit from Paolo for four and twenty hours, was that they had been given tickets to see the reception of a new Member of the Institute; and the ceremony was to take place exactly the morning following the evening, when he had appeared in their salon as unexpectedly, and with as startling an effect, as if he had been a bomb or a Bengal light. As a rule, surprises are to be avoided — an agreeable surprise is about as rare as a black swan.

To return to the Academy of France; the speech of the newly elected member, a wit as sharp as a needle; and the speech in response of the old member, who was to receive the new one, a most eloquent atrabilarian: were expected with an intense interest, and lively curiosity, nearly allied to that of amateurs of the prize ring. Both men had been political *notabilités*; both had been the standard-bearers of opposed, now deposed dynasties; therefore both were expected to hurl at each other's head, and at the heads of their rival governments, and at the head of the government which had ousted theirs, a profusion of elegant, well-balanced contumely. Nor was the general expectation disappointed, judging by the frantic applause of the closely packed audience. To our English family it was a bore from beginning to end. Four long hours of even the choicest rhetoric are more than sufficient for those most capable of appreciating it, and the Joneses were certainly not among such: the

ladies owing to preoccupations of their own, and the gentleman from the slight knowledge of the language. Fashion has its drawbacks; but the satisfaction of being able to say, "I was at the Institute on the day of Monsieur So-and-so's public reception as an Academician, is worth buying at the cost of some *ennui*."

The Vicomte du Verlat, who had provided tickets for the family with the sweat of his brow, was there as a matter of course, and joined his English acquaintances as they were coming out. After a few minutes' talk with Miss Lavinia, he said, as he was taking leave, that he counted on the pleasure of meeting her again in the evening.

"You mean at the Hôtel de Ville," said Lavinia; "but we have received no tickets."

"No tickets?" exclaimed the vicomte. "Impossible! I saw your names down on my sister's list; there must be some mistake, which I will have set to rights."

"Pray don't," was the young lady's hasty rejoinder; "we are all tired with our constant dissipation; besides, we expect company ourselves this evening."

"Nevertheless, I hope to meet you at the ball," persisted the vicomte. "It would be a crime of lèse-nationality to miss a fête given expressly in honour of the English, and at which your lord mayor is to be present. Allow me to say *au revoir*;" and, raising his hat, the polite Frenchman went his way.

The aunt and niece were rather provoked at the vicomte's gallantry, which threatened to interfere with their quiet tea at home, and agreed to aid each other in resisting all attempts to induce them to go to the Hôtel de Ville. But there is a fate against lovers. Eight in the evening was striking, and Mrs. and Miss

Jones were just leaving the dinner-table, when Madame la Générale was announced.

"The préfet is a monster; he shall account to me for his conduct. You must go with us; the General will get admission for you. The Emperor is to be there at half-past nine, so we must not be later than nine. I am sorry, but I can allow you only three-quarters of an hour to dress. I will wait here for you; you see I am already dressed." The whole of this speech was run off in a breath.

Lavinia, thanking Madame la Générale warmly, begged to be excused; Mrs. Jones alleged that they had invited a gentleman to tea: the Générale would hear of no objection, accept no excuse. Mr. Jones now interfered by telling his wife, she was making much ado about nothing. The drawing-master could come some other evening, there was nothing to prevent their going. There are moral as well as physical impossibilities. To persist in declining an offer meant in kindness, when you cannot give your reasons for doing so, is one of the number. Mrs. Jones and Lavinia had to yield and withdraw to dress, as did Mr. Jones. The Générale remained alone in the salon, turning over the leaves of an illustrated work, but her eyes often consulting the clock on the mantelpiece.

Lavinia did not take long to dress: for the first time in her life, she cared little what she put on, or how she looked. Her maid was in ecstasies of despair at her young lady's hurry. The minutes thus saved from the three-quarters of an hour allotted by the Générale, were spent in writing a hurried note to Paolo: —

"We are going to the ball at the Hôtel de Ville. Do not, I entreat of you, be angry with me; it is not

my fault; it is against my will that I go. I am literally dragged there. You can ask my aunt. Long ago, cards of invitation were promised to us by a lady, who has been kind and attentive to us, ever since we came to Paris. Somehow or other, the tickets never came; I was very glad they did not. But this lady has come herself; she is even now waiting for us in the drawing-room, and insists on our going with her. Uncle has also insisted that we should go. It was *impossible* to say no. Indeed, it was. I will explain all the circumstances to you the first time I see you — and you will be convinced that I could not help myself. Come to morrow at twelve, pray, to tell me that you are not angry with me. They are calling for me. Adieu. Don't think ill of me. I must go.

“L. J.”

Lavinia, leaving this note to her maid, with strict injunctions to wait for Signor Mancini in the hall, and to give it into his own hands, joined the party in the drawing-room. Immediately afterwards they drove off to the Hôtel de Ville.

Paolo, under pretext of a bad headache, had remained in his room the whole day; not reading, not writing, but restlessly pacing its limits when alone, or lying on the sofa when Thornton was there. Something worse still than headache was the matter with him. He felt ill, sick, and giddy, sometimes to a degree that created a fear lest he should not be able to keep his engagement for the evening. He was painfully haunted, besides, by the idea that he should do or say something foolish if he did go, being well aware that occasionally he lost all control over his thoughts, and, to a

certain extent, over his actions. Once he found himself in the ante-room, without the slightest notion of what had taken him there. At another time he fancied he heard the bell ring, and his own name so distinctly pronounced, that he went to ask whether a letter had not been brought for him. Again he could have sworn he heard Miss Jones's voice in the passage.

It was the consciousness of these repeated hallucinations which made him anxious to avoid Thornton, and keep silent in his presence as much as he could. To satisfy his friend, he agreed to take some solid food, and a tray was brought to his room; but the moment he was alone, the meat was consigned to a closet. When urged to go out, and take a look of the Boulevards or Tuileries, he pleaded fatigue — a plausible enough excuse to pass current with Thornton, who, with all his penetration, did not unfortunately discern the effort in Paolo to appear collected. It was this same want of discernment which made Thornton, out of delicacy, not again insist on accompanying the young man to the Boulevard des Capucines.

Lavinia's maid, as she had been desired, was ready in the hall when Paolo arrived. He took the note she handed to him, and without opening it, he passed her, walking mechanically towards the drawing-room. The young woman followed, trying to make him understand by signs that no one was at home, and pointing to the letter he held in his hand. He tore it open, read the first line, "We are going to the ball at the Hôtel de Ville," paused a second, as if to take in the meaning, violently crushed the paper, and, to the indescribable terror of the poor lady's-maid, tore it with his teeth.

His look, his gesture was that of a maniac. Those few words *had* maddened him.

Down the stairs, up the street. The coach, which had taken him to the Joneses was still at the door; the coachman beckons to him. Paolo sees no one, forgets that there are such things as carriages, forgets everything, except that there is a Hôtel de Ville, and that she is at a ball there.

"The Hôtel de Ville, if you please," he asks, and on he rushes in the direction pointed out. He is neither giddy nor faint now; he has the strength of a Samson. A new-born power swells his heart, hardens his muscles, a power boundless for mischief. Oh! that this world were built on pillars, that he might drag them down, and bury all mankind under the ruins.

Out of a labyrinth of narrow and squalid streets, he emerges at last into an open square, and facing him he beholds the stately pile, its noble front a blaze of light; sentinels on foot and on horseback clearly enough mark the entrance of the palace; carriages are thronging thither. Paolo follows in the wake of the well-dressed crowd, through a vast portico, up a wide staircase, through one of the large folding doors that give access to the ball-rooms. Some one stops him here. "Your ticket, sir." Paolo hurries on like one on an errand of life and death. Several officials rush after him, overtake him, bring him back, and force him out of the precincts, tabooed to ticketless individuals. Resistance is vain, they are too many for him — ten, a hundred to one. He expostulates, entreats, raves; five minutes, but five minutes, just time enough to seek out one of the guests; to whisper one word in that guest's ear. Compliance with such a request is naturally out of all question, it

would be positive disobedience of orders; no ticket, no admittance. They remonstrate with him, humanely enough at first, these moustached figures, then begin to lose patience. "Withdraw quietly, or we shall send you to the guard-house."

At this threat, Paolo forgets that he is one against a multitude, forgets time or place; all, save that he has come to curse Lavinia, and that he will do it in spite of man or devil. He throws himself furiously against his opponents — poor delirious young man! in a second he is overpowered, and carried before the officer of the guard. Luckily for Paolo, he was a grey-haired man, who had been on duty not only at many fêtes, but on many battle-fields. Life's combats and trials had sobered this elderly man, subdued the arrogance of brief martial authority. The appearance of Paolo reminded him of his own brave lad — just such another in height and carriage — far away in Algeria. The officer puts his arm within Paolo's, and gently reasoning with him, leads him down the stairs, out into the courtyard, out into the open square, and bidding him go home quietly, leaves him there.

Paolo leans against the barrier of iron rails surrounding the huge mansion, and says to himself that there must be more ways than one to get within its walls. No sooner thought, than he sets off on a search, and, in fact, finds a back entrance. It is guarded by soldiers, as in the front; never mind. With the obstinacy of a fixed idea, he steals in, unchallenged, into the interior. With a fluttering heart he springs up a narrow staircase — his hope dies — a group of men are on this landing-place, as they were on that of the principal stair, and equally oppose his further progress.

Stopped, questioned, repulsed, he offers his purse only for one peep at the ball-room; it is indignantly refused, and once more comes the threat of the guard-house. Once more he finds himself forced back to the street, conscious only that he is foiled. He wanders round and round the building, but without aim or purpose. Stumbling against a block of stone, he drops on it exhausted.

He sat there, God knows how long, looking at the gaily illuminated façade, listening to the music, his eyes straining after the shadows thrown on the window-blinds by the dancers. He listened, and looked involuntarily, unconsciously, like one too heavy with sleep or drink to understand what he sees or hears. To the orgasm which had supported him hitherto, had succeeded a complete prostration of mind and body. His thoughts floated from object to object, indistinct, incoherent, like the visions of fever. That he was ill, and cold, and wretched past conception — that he was probably dying, and that death would be welcome, was his clearest impression; but of the why of all this wretchedness, he had now not the slightest conception.

On a sudden he was startled by a vivid flash of light in his eyes. A man was holding a lantern close to his face, and a gruff voice was ordering him to rise, and take himself away. He did try to get up, but he was unable; two men put him on his feet, and he strove to walk, but reeled like one drunk with liquor. It was the night patrol who had roused him; they laughed, calling to him that he had had enough. His mind's compass was lost, and, like a wreck, he drifted right or left at hap hazard. Shivering, and in pain, he put

up his hand to his head; his thick hair was like a mass of wet, tangled sea-weed. It was only then he perceived that rain was falling fast, that he had lost his hat, and was literally wet to the skin. The clang of a loud tolling close at hand startled him with a sense of terror; it was the hour of the night falling from the belfry of Notre Dame. Paolo raised his eyes; above him towered a dark mass, which, as he looked, seemed to totter threateningly forwards. He rushed from under the shadow on to a bridge, saw water flowing below, and stopped to wonder and consider whether it could be the Tiber. At the other end of the street, beyond the bridge, a large red ball of fire attracted his attention; he felt fascinated by it, made straight towards it, then — red lamp, and every other thing, even to the last glimmering of consciousness, vanished. He lay senseless on the pavement.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The good Samaritans.

THE glare which had attracted unlucky Paolo, proceeded from a large lamp of red glass, placed in front of a very low shabby house of two stories, that is, of a ground floor surmounted by a garret, one of those ugly interruptions occurring in a long handsome line of buildings, like a warning to the passers-by of the existence of poverty and toil. The red lamp indeed denoted one of those humble establishments, so precious to the less wealthy portion of the community, at which omnibuses stop, to take up or put down passengers, and where correspondence tickets for all parts of Paris may be had for threepence, one of the great improvements of civilization, economising the artisan's and workman's time and strength.

A little man in a lamentably conditioned dressing gown, his little body half out of the garret window, immediately above the waiting room of the said bureau, was in the act of extinguishing, by the aid of a short stick, the red lamp beneath, when Paolo fell heavily on the pavement.

"Bless my soul," exclaimed the little man, "some one has dropped down close to our door."

"Drunk, I dare say," replied the voice of a woman, coming apparently from some recess within the garret chamber. "Shut the window at once, Prosper, it is desperately cold."

"Drunk or not drunk," observed good-naturedly the

said Prosper, as he obeyed the order to shut the window, "the wet pavement is no bed for one of God's creatures in this bitter night; one would not willingly leave a dog there. I'll go and see." And quickly descending what was more like a ladder than a staircase, he opened the door of the office, went where Paolo was lying, and stooping to the level of the prostrate figure's face, after a few seconds of examination, exclaimed, "He is not drunk, poor fellow, but ill; perhaps he's subject to fits. Holla! Prudence, come, and give me a hand."

This request was addressed to a female clothed in a woollen petticoat and jacket, who had followed on Prosper's heels, as a good and curious wife should always do, and was standing shivering on the threshold of her home. Prudence without hesitation stepped out, and husband and wife struggled to lift Paolo's inanimate form, a task, however, to which they were unequal. "We might as well try to move the Colonne Vendôme," said the panting little Prosper; "he'd do for a cuirassier of the guard. I must fetch Benoît."

Benoît was Prosper's godfather and acknowledged Mentor, a man who knew everything, could do everything, and was always and inevitably right. He lived at some baths near at hand, where he ruled supreme over the vapour and douches department. Mr. Prosper hobbled along a little way in a straight line, turned into a narrow lane to the left, then into a narrow lane to the right, stopped at a window with shutters, in the centre of which was a loophole protected by an iron grating. Here Mr. Prosper knocked a *réveille* with his knuckles, calling loudly on Benoît.

"*Présent,*" growled a husky voice within, followed

by a shuffling of slippers, which seemed to indicate that the owner of the husky voice was coming to answer the summons; when, all of a sudden, the shuffling ceased, and was succeeded by a brisk stamping of feet, and angry bursts of "One — two — three — floored — *quoi?*"

"Come, come," urged Prosper, familiar with the amiable weakness of Benoît, who was for ever at quarte and tierce with an imaginary foe, "you can finish him to-morrow; just now, we want you at the shop; make haste, I can't wait for you;" and Prosper limped away, but was overtaken almost immediately by Benoît. The combined strength of the trio enabled them to half drag, half carry Paolo into the waiting-room, and lay him on the floor. Prudence fastened the outer door, and then ran upstairs for a pillow. Benoît scrutinized the still insensible form with an intensely wise and critical air, and Prosper examined Benoît with the devoted look of a dog at his master.

"It is a case of cholera," dogmatically pronounced Benoît.

"Cholera!" exclaimed husband and wife, turning the colour of ashes.

"Of cholera," repeated Benoît: "don't you see how black he is becoming in the face? and how stiff and cold his lower limbs are? The blood is frozen up to the young fellow's waist, I tell you. As soon as his heart freezes, there's an end of him."

"God have mercy on us all," said the woman; "we can't keep him here, the children will catch it and die; he must go to the hospital, do you hear, Prosper? It is only a step; *allons donc.*"

"Ah, very well," said Benoît; "then the boy's

dead — dead, I say, twice over before you get him admitted. I know their ways. Ten minutes of a vapour douche at my place, and he is cured — cured I say; but I have no fire, and no fire no vapour, and there's an end of it."

"But, but, what then do you advise, *parrain*?" asked Prosper, with an appealing look at Benoît.

"Advise, hein? — why, that we do our best, and — — *à la garde de Dieu*," quoth Benoît. "You two bring down a mattress, and put some sticks in the stove, while I run to my place. We shall want plenty of hot water presently."

The mattress was ready, and the wood was crackling in the wretched stove, when Benoît returned. He had some difficulty this time in making good his entrance, so enormously was his bulk increased by the amount of blankets, which, to carry more conveniently, he had wrapped round his person. Necessity in this case had been the mother of invention, for, holding in one hand a black bottle, in the other a big scrubbing-brush, and in his mouth a short *brûle-gueule* unlit indeed, but out of which he sent puffs of imaginary smoke: how otherwise could he have brought the blankets?

"There," said he, shaking off his cumbrous envelope, and making a feint or two at the wall with the scrubbing-brush, "we must make our invalid a bed fit for a Christian to lie on;" and he began spreading the blankets on the mattress. "Ha, ha, but not here, now that I think of it, or we shall have to shift his quarters in the morning — *mon Dieu!* what it is to have a head on one's shoulders. Better take him into your *salle-à-manger*, out of the way of your customers."

Without waiting for any assent, Benoît snatched up mattress and blankets, and forthwith carried them into what he had dignified into a *salle-à-manger*, but which in fact was kitchen and hall for the family. The waiting-room, or "shop," as Benoît called it invariably, this kitchen, and two garret rooms, constituted Mr. Prosper's dwelling.

"Now, for the boy himself," cried Benoît; "take his feet, *fillemul*; — no, no, madame, this is not woman's work; my godson and I can manage it." But Prudence, whether better acquainted with her husband's powers, or from the indomitable charity of a woman's heart, forgot her fears of infection, and insisted on lending a hand to carry the "boy," and lay him gently on the mattress, first divesting him of his wet garments. Benoît, in his glory, then administered a professional rubbing that might have forced heat into marble, after which he wrapped Paolo in all the blankets, placed bottles full of hot water to his feet and to his back, and poured down his throat, spoonful by spoonful, a considerable dose of hot cognac and water. When all this had been accomplished, Benoît went and sat down by the stove, lighted his pipe, and now filling the room with real volumes of pungent vapour, gravely watched for the effects of his curative method on his patient.

Let us have patience enough for Benoît's simple story. Benoît was what is called an *enfant de Paris*. He had enlisted at the age of eighteen, and seen a good deal of active service both in France and Algeria. He had risen to the rank of sergeant, and the stripes on his sleeve would have been exchanged for the golden epaulettes on the shoulder, had Benoît not been so illiterate. His skill as a swordsman had made him

respected and feared throughout his military career, and caused him to be appointed *maître d'armes* to his regiment, a fact which explains his fencing monomania. At forty he had obtained his discharge, and settling in Paris, he had ever since been a sort of jack-of-all-trades. Prosper, his godson, had met the ex-sergeant in a moment when the latter's fortunes were at a very low ebb. The good-natured little fellow had assisted his godfather as far as his means allowed, and by dint of seeking and being in earnest, had succeeded in finding the employment, tolerably lucrative, if not enviable, which that worthy now fulfilled at a thermal establishment close by; — we say *not enviable*, because Benoît's duties involved the necessity of living in a temperature of between 110 degs. and 120 degs. Fahrenheit.

This timely service had strengthened the ties, rather loose hitherto, between godfather and godson. There was nothing that Benoît would not do for Prosper, as there was nothing that Prosper would not do for Benoît. Benoît was actuated by gratitude, Prosper by admiration. Benoît had all the strong and the weak points of a trooper; he was serviceable, generous, warm-hearted, but hot-headed, touchy, despotic and intolerant; ready to share his last crust with an old comrade, or to cut that comrade's throat on the slightest provocation. In personal appearance, Benoît was tall, lean, sinewy; time had thinned his flowing locks, but he balanced their loss by wearing enormous grey moustaches, and a large tuft on his chin. Though upwards of fifty, his strength and activity were proverbial in the neighbourhood; first baked by the sun in Africa, and then boiled by the steam of the Paris establishment of baths, in which he now lived, he had

become equally impervious to cold and heat. The prominent items of his costume in all seasons, consisted of a pair of slippers, a blouse, and a long apron. In the same clothes in which he administered a *douche* at the temperature of 40 degs. Réaumur, he would walk out in the street when the thermometer was at 15 degs. below zero. Such was the strange doctor assigned by fate to Paolo.

At last, after more than an hour of perfect insensibility, Paolo began to give some signs of returning animation, first by a series of stifled moans, then by repeated but weak efforts to rid himself of his load of covering, and to change his position. Any one, except a man so obstinate and self-conceited as Benoît, would have understood these manifestations of discomfort; on the contrary, the ex-sergeant welcomed every one of these movements, by digging his elbow into poor little Prosper's sides, chuckling with triumph, and exclaiming now and then, "Do you see, the blood is thawing; well done, *mon garçon*, — a little faster if you can." As if in obedience to this wish, "my boy's" pulse went at a racing gallop, until Benoît would fain have slackened the speed, had he known how. Paolo's feeble attempts at motion soon changed into a constant jerk from right to left, from left to right. The more the restless sufferer strove to throw the blankets from him, the more strenuously did Benoît insist on covering him.

By four in the morning Paolo had become almost unmanageable, either sitting bolt upright, staring round him with bloodshot eyes, or springing off the mattress in a way, which the united exertions of the three persons present could scarcely control. When things had come to this pass, Prudence, notwithstanding her habi-

tual reverence for Benoît, proposed that one of them should fetch Mr. Perrin. Prosper said "Ay," and Benoît "No," grounding his opposition on his experience of cholera, as great or greater than that of Mr. Perrin. Mr. Perrin had never been out of Paris. What more could Mr. Perrin do than he, Benoît, had done? But Prudence was not to be pacified without Mr. Perrin, so Benoît yielded with a significant shrug of the shoulders, saying, "Let the woman have her way." Without further remark, Prudence put on a faded tartan shawl and went to seek Mr. Perrin.

Mr. Perrin was one of the resident physicians (*internes*) of the Hôtel Dieu, who visited much among the poor in that neighbourhood, and was deservedly most popular in the class, from which he had himself sprung. The son of a postman, he was familiar with the hardships, the wants, the peculiar language of what are called the lower orders, and was always ready at their bidding. This good man had come out of Nature's hand short, thin, sickly, sallow, and so shortsighted that he could not see the top of his own nose without spectacles. Early deprivations, and the daily sight of human misery, had rendered him grey, grim, withered, old before his time.

The Hôtel Dieu was not more than one minute's walk from Prosper's bureau, being in fact, exactly opposite. As soon as he heard Prudence's story, Mr. Perrin begged one of his colleagues to take his place in case of need, put on his overcoat, and in less time than it takes to say so, was standing by Paolo's sick bed, watch in hand, his experienced finger interrogating the rapid pulse, his look grave and inscrutable, like that of Destiny itself.

"He is half smothered," observed Mr. Perrin, relieving the sick man of all but one of the numerous blankets.

"Is it — cholera?" asked Prudence.

"Cholera? nonsense," said the physician. "You dream of nothing but cholera. I almost wish it was. This is a case of cerebral congestion, brought on by God knows what, heightened and helped by brandy, and blankets, and hot bottles. I want a basin, and a pair of scissors."

Even Benoît was cowed by the doctor's earnest manner, and swallowed the protest which rose on his lips against this fiat.

Mr. Perrin, with lancet in hand, said to Prudence, who brought him the basin and scissors, —

"Now, madame, take a basket and a tumbler with you, if you please, and go to the surgery of the Hôtel Dieu, ask for a couple of dozen of leeches, and eight kilos of ice. Say it is for Dr. Perrin; you needn't pay — just now."

By the time that Prudence came back with the leeches and the ice, the patient had been bled — a difficult task it had been to keep him still for that purpose, he raved so — and all his fine hair had also been cut off. The doctor wrapped some of the ice in a cloth, and applied it to Paolo's head, giving directions at the same time that similar applications should be unremittingly continued.

"As to the leeches," he went on, "if the gentleman is not quieter in two hours, which is not very likely, put a dozen behind each ear. You'll put them on at seven," he added, consulting his watch. "I shall be

here at eight, and, if it be possible, we will have him removed to the hospital."

"With your leave, doctor," inquired Prudence, "is this cerebral combustion anything catching?"

"Not in the least," replied Mr. Perrin, with a smile; "why do you ask?"

"Because," explained Prudence, with some embarrassment, "if there is no danger for the children, we could nurse the poor fellow here very well."

"Thought and spoken like a good woman, and a true woman," said the doctor, with another smile, which made him look quite young and handsome; "but you must consider, madame, that this young man's malady, though not infectious, may have other serious consequences for you: first, it may end fatally —"

"I am sure it will not," put in Prudence.

"And secondly," pursued the doctor, "supposing, as you say, he recovers, his illness is certain to be long, troublesome, and expensive."

"As to time, I have plenty of that to give," urged Prudence; "as to money —"

"Well, we have not much to boast of in that way," says Prosper, striking into the conversation, "but we have a little credit, and —"

"And some friends," growled Benoît, significantly.

"We'll discuss the matter further by and by," said Mr. Perrin. "In the meantime, don't forget to use the ice freely, and, if he is not better, the leeches at seven, twelve behind each ear: *à bientôt*. By the by," said the doctor, returning, "let me see the young man's clothes."

They were produced by Prudence. The doctor inspected them, with a view to the identification of his

patient, but no clue of the sort came of the inspection; there was neither card-case nor pocket-book, nor letters, nor purse, in the pockets — nothing but a white handkerchief marked P., and a pair of black gloves. The only conclusion Mr. Perrin was able to draw from the fineness of the linen, and the cut and stuff of the clothes, was that this unexpected customer of his was what is called a gentleman.

Paolo's restlessness, which had abated a little in consequence of the bleeding, having reappeared long before the hour of seven, Benoît, who was really a capital hand at dressing of wounds and all that sort of thing, had recourse to the leeches, but with an air of gloomy incredulity, meant to express "all time lost."

The cold gray March morning's light, which was now beginning to peep into the *salle-à-manger* of the omnibus establishment, gave the signal of retreat to the ruler of the neighbouring vapour and douche department. He went, uttering those peculiar ominous sounds of the lips, with which people mark their apprehensions. Prosper on his side, was taking down the shutters, and preparing for an active day after an active night, when in came Mr. Perrin again. He seemed rather satisfied with the state of his patient, and said nothing more of his removal.

The doctor called twice during the day, and again in the evening, bleeding Paolo at his first and last visit. Very grave and thoughtful Mr. Perrin looked. Prudence never left the sick room, and Prosper spent there all the shreds of time, and they were not many, which the exigencies of his calling left at his disposal. If Benoît rushed over once for news, he must have done so at least fifty times. Though he was to relieve Pros-

per's watch at three in the morning, behold him in the "shop" at near midnight, the hour when he had a right to consider himself released from the service of the public. Gradually, as the day had waned, so had his suspicious, dissatisfied mood insensibly merged into the patronising, with a good dash of the maudlin, witness the mysterious assumption of importance, with which he drew Prosper into a corner, and dropped a dirty paper ball containing three napoleons into his hand, and the burst of sensibility, which caused him in so doing to lay his head on Prosper's shoulder, and with sobs to exclaim, —

"It will serve for his burial, poor boy, it will serve for his burial."

Prosper silently pocketed the money, perceiving from the combined flavour of tobacco, and *petits verres*, exhaling from his worthy godfather's lips, that he had reached that stage of concentrated self-will, when a word of contradiction would have driven the old soldier to frenzy.

When her husband closed the bureau, Prudence went to take some rest in her garret, and Prosper laid himself down on a paillasse at the foot of the sick man's mattress. And now we may as well leave this scene of suffering and benevolence for a while, with the less fear of any untoward accident occurring in our absence, that Paolo is by far too interesting a personage in our story, to be conveniently spared before the end.

END OF VOL. I.

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When her husband closed the bureau, Prosper went to take some rest in her garret, and Prosper laid him self down on a pallet at the foot of the sick man's mattress. And now we may as well leave this scene of suffering and benevolence for a while, with the least of any untoward accident occurring in our absence, that each is by far too interesting a personage in our story, to be conveniently spared before the end.

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When her husband closed the bureau, Prosper went to take some rest in her garret, and Prosper laid him self down on a pallet at the foot of the sick man's mattress. And now we may as well leave this scene of suffering and desolation for a while, with the loss of any story and incident occurring in our absence, that is by far too interesting a personage in our story, to be conveniently spared before the end.

END OF VOL. I.

Ruffini, Giovanni,

Lavinia

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